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# HE UPPER WAY

WILLIAM CURTIS STILES

# THE UPPER WAY

## An Open-Air Discourse of the Path of Life, and the Process of Walking Therein

BY

WILLIAM CURTIS STILES, B.D.

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
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# Dedication

TO MARY A. A. STILES, MY WIFE, WHO THROUGH THE YEARS OF SUNSHINE AND SHADOW HAS WALKED WITH ME IN OUR JOURNEYS THROUGH THE UPPER WAY OF CHRISTIAN LIVING, AND IN WHOSE HIGHER SPIRITUAL INSIGHT THE TRUTHS HEREIN WRITTEN HAVE BEEN MORE CLEARLY DISCERNED, THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY

**The Author**

☆Publishers Weekly
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# PREFACE

An attempt has been made to present in these pages the theme of Christian salvation in untheological terms. The treatise intentionally slights some of the most prominent subjects usually deemed essential to this topic. The forensic language of Paul is entirely eliminated. The technical metaphysics of credal statements is avoided. The relation to divine law which has commonly been described in expressions of the atonement of Christ has not been extensively considered. Neither has the mystery of incarnation. All speculation about justification and all theorizing about the nature and extent of punishment have likewise been left out.

This has not been because the author has no theology of these things, but solely because of the purpose in view. The author has believed it possible to confine a sufficient statement of God's way of salvation to the two or three main considerations of this book. He has aimed to show the prime cause of salvation in the Suffering Love of God, and the main human condition of it in the Free Choice of man. In doing this it is

assumed that room is left, without the least contradiction, for affirming in the full development of the subject, if that should be desired, all the scriptural and credal truths embraced in the evangelical systems of faith. The omission of them from this book should not by any means be construed as any expression of doubt about them, still less as any denial of them. Writing for people who are not trained in theological vocabularies, it has simply been deemed best not to introduce conceptions requiring more or less philosophical explanation. The author has accomplished his purpose if he has shown his reader the necessary things to do in order to be saved, and the one Power upon whom he must rely for salvation.

If any further justification of this very simple method were desired it might be found in a fact that we have all noted in our own day—the fact that laymen and, especially, younger people in our churches, to say nothing of those whom we are trying to bring to the Saviour, are no longer as familiar with the theological language as once they were. We are fortunate in this day if we can begin with any of them as far along as the consideration of salvation. We will usually be more likely to be obliged to expound and defend the Bible itself, and the nature and being of God, and the most simple affirmation of a possible life hereafter. If

any work can be done with men, as they go to-day, by way of teaching them evangelical truth about salvation, it has seemed to the writer that it must be done in a very simple fashion and in terms familiar to the commonest thinking. Such words as "justification," "sanctification," "redemption from the law," "vicarious atonement," etc., are no longer in common speech and common interest as once they were. Labored explanations of them no longer serve the purpose that once they served. Is it not doubtful in this day whether a book written around these terms and the conceptions they embody would be much read, or do much good, except as edifying those already versed in the terminology? At all events, the author has taken the risk of a different attempt, hoping that it will be found broad enough to include all evangelical development while simple enough to make clear the main essential truth of salvation through Christ.

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# PART I

## THE FACTS THAT GO BEFORE

# CHAPTER I

## THE UNIVERSAL IMPERATIVE

In which it Appears to Us, as We Walk Together in the Open Way, that Something Is the Matter with Us and that We Need to be Saved.

---

*"Sin is the master of the mind by nature, though in some cases it secures the soul to the service of the world by bonds as fine as gossamer. Satan forges some of his chains of hard bondage, heavy as iron, strong as brass. In other cases he binds the heart with golden fetters, and thus gratifies the pride; . . . though all alike are his slaves who are led captive by the devil at his will."*

—BOWDEN.

COME, journey with me in the open way! These canopies are of the clouds and the sky, and under them there is room for our full stature; we may even stand upon tiptoe and not bump our heads. There is room. We shall not hedge ourselves in with definitions that reduce the limitless spaces to a bedchamber, and the bedchamber to a closet, and the closet to the dimensions of the mole's burrow in the meadow. Let the theologians attend to that. As for us, how wide is the range! This air blows free from the mountain, and no one chains it up. This sunshine floods all the space, and it cannot be tied under nor bound in. Let us speak freely, where the universe may listen if it chooses, but especially the speech that addresses the heart. There is a practical common sense in the utmost theme, and

when Jesus talks all the philosophers are ashamed. If only we can talk so!

Let us forget that we call this divinity. The old preachers arranged their sermons so as to present a body of divinity. We all have heard of this division of things into secular and sacred, but—*cui bono?* Whatever concerns us is sacred. Should I not rather say, whatever *ought* to concern us? But we are to talk of the soul and its concerns. Do not pause to pester me with the question whether we have any soul. In this free air, where we stand erect and take in the ozone of everlasting mountains and the fresh breath of the sea, men do not play the fool and ask that senseless question. What I am, that is my soul. It shall not matter, while I think of realities and consider destiny and the outcome, whether I say aught of my soul or whether I say, "Let us talk of Thyself." For thou hast long known that it is Thyself who walks here under the cloud canopy, in whom the universe speaks. Thyself! And somehow there is a conceit in us all that will not be put out, assuring us that this canopy and the clouds of it, this sunbeam and the host of them, these mountains, this ocean, and the whole range where we move, are for us, and not we for them. We enjoy them, they cannot understand us. It is this tremendous upgathering of spirit and mind and conscience and will and affections which we call "Thyself," and "Myself," by reason of which the universe is interesting. Otherwise we see only dumb solitude and say, "How absurd!"

It is this certainty that justifies us while we walk

along, in talking about Thyself. If I say thy soul I mean nothing different, but since we are forever coming upon fools who like to ask the other question—whether or not they have any soul—let us put the word out of court and interrogate all things we come upon to find out about Thyself.

Even the questioner with old words seems to have something to say to us when he asks about our salvation. There is no strange sound in the question. We have long wondered why, even with room over our heads, we are not content in our place. The sunshine seems to have a pang in it, and the free breath of the ocean often makes us chilly. Is there, then, nothing the matter with a man? There are those who prate, and they say, "Let us alone, for God made us." They take a more rapid gait, and they say, "We are what God intended us to be. Why do you talk of being lost?" And often they add, "It is God's world anyhow, and we will therefore come out all right." But is there, then, nothing the matter? This is a simple question in such a world as this. If it were not for the praters and pretenders we should think it a perfectly absurd question. The common man, talking with simplicity like that which Jesus used, scoffs at the folly of it, and says at once, "We know there is something the matter."

Well, if there were not we could not talk together on this journey. If the fresh breath from the mountains and the sea has cleared the metaphysical cobwebs out of our brains perhaps we can find out what *is* the matter. That will be better than an airy dismissal of

the thought. That will be more profitable, let us believe, than to rôte and repeat the offhand folly of the philosophers who tell us that men are what God made them and can be let alone. Very possibly, if we could inspect our faint beginnings, we should discover that there was something the matter with us before ever we saw this golden light of sun or the glimmer of heaven's stars. If the deep-minded men of science should prove to us that we have carried up with us into this human anatomy and spirit the beast traits that make the tiger cruel and the hyena untamable, would that prove that there is nothing the matter with us? It is not good to be cruel, and human hyenas shock nature and set us thinking what to do with them. Suppose it to be true that we have each a beast inside that growls and hates and preys. That would be an explanation, perhaps, of the origin of that which is the matter with us, but we should not be less beastly after your philosopher had explained it. Here in our open journey under the canopy there is room enough for the scientist to prove such things all he likes. We shall not attend to him much, just now, because he has not finished his proof and we cannot be disturbed with his long words. He has done enough if he has shown us that there is a beast in us. We knew there was something!

It is a grief to us, here in the free air, to think that we may catch whiffs of malaria from yonder meadow. The Christian Scientist has not disturbed our belief in the reality of malaria. And isn't it awful to reflect that after all these long ages of man we have not

learned enough to live more than seventy years—or on the average about forty years? Death comes swiftly, and even here in the bright sunshine we feel him all about us. The oxygen that builds us up is also momentarily destroying us. Death comes swiftly! And death is the matter with us. And all because of our ignorance! The laws of living, the highway to perpetual youth, the secret of immortality we have not been able to learn. The first serpent in these grasses at our feet may slay us with a fang not larger than a darning needle. Germs from the slough that has gathered at the foot of the hill yonder, invisible in the ordinary microscope, convey subtle and certain death that even now, perchance while we walk, is passing into us with our breathing. At the lowest term we need to be saved from such ignorance. And it is not such a low term either. True, we do not live as well as we know, but if we did we would not even then be able to suppose that there is nothing the matter with us. What we know goes not very far. If we did as well as we know death remains, and all the pangs that lead to it. The sins of other men remain also. We suffer because others sin. We cannot say we are *saved* while we die, and while we feel the discord of our short lives.

When they tell us there is nothing the matter, mostly they speak in a dream. Even under the high canopy we stop looking up because we begin to look within. Memory, conscience—the Holy Ghost in the inner holy of the heart—voices a story that makes us tremble. We stop under the sunshine in that instant when truth

utters its deliverance, and we say, "I am a sinner." True, perhaps it was the beast in me that growled, but when he growled I heard the undertone of Myself. Within this inner jungle of the soul, when the angel appeared, he heard the beast and the beast and the angel looked at each other through the jungle. The beast—that is Myself just as truly as the angel is. Even in my delusive dream I cannot lay this growl and the hateful spirit to some alien beast of the ancient jungle. Let it be that it is a beast that came up out of the jungles through the long evolution of ages, still I know it is a beast now in me for the first time absolutely unchained. The beast is free, and growls for himself. And the beast is Myself. Free, accountable, responsible, arbiter of the beast, competent to shape destiny! Ancestry does not account for Thyself—not wholly. Ignorance is not the extent and sum of that which is the matter. The matter is deeper, subtler, more intractable. The preacher who used old words gathered it up in the little, large, tremendous syllable of theology and of the Scripture, and he said, "This is sin!"

Fine scrutiny of the inward processes we do not need. Why should we multiply words to describe this reality? Memory, conscience, the Holy Ghost in the inner holy of the heart, make plain to every one of us that we are sinners—free, responsible, inexcusable. Nevertheless the assurance is not a something that stands alone. Out here, under the high canopy of the stars and clouds, thou knowest that thou hast better things in thee. It is this that makes sin. It is this

eternal balancing, this weighing of one choice against another, this vision of the angel face to face with the beast, that opens to us the nature of moral mal-doing. What I am is not important; it is what I am compared with what I might be. Ah! this is the sting, and this is the point of all sinfulness. It is a question of better or worse, of higher and lower. For memory, that speaks of past transgression, and conscience, that upbraids for what I do and think and say, have no meaning only as I know that I might do better, think more righteously, speak more lovingly. My sin is in the contrast. If the beast were there alone in his lair he might growl on forever and thou shouldest not know that the growl is better or worse. But because the angel is there too and can teach us his song—and offers to—it is for this that the growl is horrible.

Then it must be that we need more than to be saved from the beast. The quagmire of Old Adamism in a man is deep and tenacious. Great is the triumph if a man escapes it. Nevertheless he looks at the mountain. He has not quite shaken the mire from his slow boots yet. He has asked the question if there be not something the matter with him, and he has said, "We know there is." And he points to the quagmire. But when he is safe out of it, still he will not say, "Now there is nothing the matter." For in his far-off vision is the mountain. He must be saved again. Not merely from, but to! On the summit gleams the home light, and he only struggled from the quagmire that he might begin to climb the holy steep.

It is hateful to be a beast. "Who shall deliver me from this death body?" But when I ask this pilgrim why, he points to the angel and says, "That I may sing." He points to the mountain and adds, "That I may climb, and get home." For Thyself—under the canopy, in the open world—Thyself hath visions, ideals, heights before thee: a goal, a prize, a heaven. Shall we not consider the passage? It is the transit of a soul. It is the pilgrimage of Thyself.

All that is good within a man sets his feet astir for this passage. As we walk under the canopy of the sky, where there is room to think our best thoughts, we know that a "woe" is on us to begin. Even the beast in us, if he could, would show us his claws hidden in fur and would tell us that altruism and love lie possible even in him. Let us be saved! let us be saved! The universal imperative, consummate in every high voice that rolls in upon the nature of man and speaks in his inner chamber of consciousness, demands our assent. The stark, dire need over all others discloses itself in every push of nature, in every impulse of conscience, in every voice that rings from the stars. Let us not dally with explanations. Are you not a sinner, my friend? Do you see nothing yet higher to reach after? There is ignorance, colossal and binding, and death comes after swiftly. Caught you are in the great nature pang of the universe, and you cannot escape. There is life on the mountain, and somewhere a fount of perpetual youth, but where is our strength? It is absurd to pause and say, "This is religion," or "This

is theology." Remember Thyself. Tissue of vanishing atoms, whirled in the bosom of endless years—what art thou? Struggling in quagmires, while thou hast not been able to hide thine eyes from the light that burns on mountain tops! It may be religion to consider how thou wilt get home, but is not the question interesting? Out here in the open, where the stars burn, let us think about it. The need is great, the question is the only one thou hast. Let us be saved!

# CHAPTER II

## THE SELF STRUGGLE

**In which it Becomes Plain to Us that, Try However He May, a Man Cannot Save Himself.**

---

*"An eagle, though she enjoy her wings and beak, is wholly a prisoner if she is held but by one talent; and so are we, though we could be delivered of all habit of sin, in bondage still if we were held only by one of its silken threads."*—DONNE.

To the pilgrim on the perilous passage upward from the quagmire to the mountain summit the question of his own strength is a great question. It comes on directly after his conclusion that he needs to go up. The universal imperative assures him that he must go up, but the inventory of his abilities halts him and he says thoughtfully, "But can I go up?" At this threshold of effort theology meets him, or perchance his own weariness, and he finds innumerable lions in the way. Let him stand halted in the quagmire and ask whether he has power in himself to struggle out. And theology comes to him and answers that, of himself, he is helpless. And the answer is not strange to him, and he knows that it is true.

Strange that the first teaching of salvation is the teaching of man's natural powerlessness! But how simple the statement is! The pilgrim knows better

than any teacher the weakness of his muscles. The more he has struggled the more intensely he realizes his weakness. He is not sure that he can really see to the top of the mountain that he knows he must scale, but even seen imperfectly the height is dizzy. There is always enough goodness above and beyond us to terrify if it cannot inspire us. Man's whole thought, flowing through him from the floods of God's thought, is revelation of things seemingly unreachable. And except we somehow be furnished with wings, and the flight of angels, even the high good that we know is beyond our reach.

First, there are even moments when we love the quagmire. There are hours of life when we resist not at all. The fascination of the lower is on us now. True, we have not escaped the universal imperative, but we have stopped our ears with cotton. We have turned to listen to the great argument that drowns for the time the greater argument. The great argument denies the greater argument, and reasons to us that the pleasures of the beast are near and real, while the song of the angel is far away, like an echo of the improbable. Why forever resist nature? Why not indulge? Why call it sin? Did not God make us to be animal, and give us our animalism and our appetites? What for, pray, but to gratify? Besides, perhaps this dream of another life is an invention of the priests after all. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." From the soul that listens to this great argument we do not look for effort competent to escape from the quagmire.

For the time, and oftentimes, the beast has conquered in him, and when he finds a better mood he is weaker and his yielding has made him still more incompetent to save himself. And the habit of indulgence, the momentum of sin, gathers in him, the bonds increasing their strength as his years go by. This soul knows, sometimes with all the vigor of despair, that he has not power to save himself. It was this soul, indeed, or some one who looked upon him and heard his groans, that made the theology and set it hard and fast in the systems. It is so of the more part of these great credal truths.

Scarcely has the pilgrim understood that his malady is so deep. He cannot easily understand why he cannot cure it, and do it shortly. When he tunes up a little, and actually gets a fragment of the angel's song in his mouth and finds it sweet, and longs to sing its highest note, he cries out for somebody to stay him up. Like Peter, he would forever tarry on the mount of this transfiguration. Days afterward, when he feels again the quagmire sticking about his feet, he wonders how he ever sank back again and why he cannot keep his standing. O, there is a tremendous truth at which our evolutionists are groping. Biology in a sinner might be revelation of life qualities that would startle him if he understood them. What! and does he think he can strain out the spites and curses and dregs and taints of innumerable years that lurk and loiter in his heredity—blood pressed out of all the deadly hatreds of time, spleen grained into his tissues from racial sins

back to the days of Adam? And science, if it contributes at all, says that Adam was late in the process, and that these traits and spleens and blood taints antedate the man, and come down from the awful throes of Nature, in the raven of tooth and claw, since, in the primeval dawn, the first savage death began the disorder of the cosmos and the universal terror of sacrifice.

And this poor spasmodic mortal, struggling a little with his feeble will, thinks it a hard sentence when the man of God comes to him and says, "You have no power, unaided, to undo the ages and save yourself out of the universe of death." Puny atom, caught in the vast maelstrom!

Still more puny stand the attempts of the lonesome pilgrim when he measures the heights and ascents of the mountain. His quagmire truly is wider and deeper and older than he has dreamed, but so is his mountain higher and steeper. Can a man build ladders to scale the battlements of heaven? How high must you go, my friend? And we look all about us, seeing some men here and there who are better than we. We would be measurably satisfied if we were as good. Even this seems a high ambition, and we are not equal to it. We find fault, and say that they have advantages and we are unfortunate. And talking thus we come all at once upon an honest moment and shame rushes over us, for we knew we had deceived ourselves. Our own ideals are higher than these human examples. The greater man that we would be is not in history, he is

in Thyself. And it is this man within Thyself that thou must climb up to. The universal imperative commands us to be like this man we dreamed of while the angel's song was caught on our tongues for a moment and we had a flash of God shot through us. No matter how good or bad any other may be, has been, is now, every man knows what sort of man he must be; and if he cannot be this man, then, for him, no heaven shall ever be. Let me fall short of this holy and perfect man that is within myself and I am lost. The preacher did not tell you this. You felt it and knew it—felt it and knew it as the final truth, never to be escaped, when you had the honest moment and God drew nigh.

And this is so high you knew that there was no device of the mind and no power of the will sufficient to realize it. If this is to be "saved," then surely it was no mere catchword of theology that proclaimed that a man cannot save himself. But experience in struggling has taught us something. It has shown us that although we are not out of the quagmire, still less at the mountain top, there must come a time when we will surely give this struggle up. Slowly, gradually, by little and little, the pilgrim is coming to see that to struggle in a quagmire, without any hand to lift, is only to sink even deeper. If the time comes that this is actually decided, and still there is no hand to lift, what is left but just to submit to the quagmire, and even to begin to be content with it? What is the use? And thus the fruits of experience and failure are added to the weight of the conviction that we cannot of our-

selves reach the heights of salvation. When a man begins to say, "What is the use?" and to let himself drift, he has given it up.

But it has not given him up. There is no desolate island where the universe will leave him alone. And he finds indeed that he has not exactly given it up, because he can still see the light at the mountain top. Every time it flashes through the dimness it reproaches him with his spiritual cowardice, and he says still, "But I could if I would." Or he says, "O that I only might! Who will help me?" Run through his whole woof of feeling there is a haunting thrill of heaven, and he cannot escape the yearning. No bird nesting in the arctic wilds that has not felt the luring touch and ineffable invitation of tropic suns and equatorial perfumes. No silent spring, lying dark in a mountain woodland, that has not heard the great ocean say in its heart, "Come, come, come!" And no sinner of time and the world that must not still hear, in arctic solitude or in darkened woodland, the inviting voices that speak to him of summer and the sea. No matter! It must be so! God will make his echoes in the heart. Ideals will tempt us in the silent moment and we escape them not.

Such is the mercy and long-suffering of God. In Thyself thou knowest that thou canst not give him up because he will not give thee up. A man may turn away and say, "Go to, let us be wicked. Let us have no more to do with this God. Let us take the risk. Let us drive him entirely away." How daring! And

how futile! We dream a dream the first uneasy night, and wake to say, "It was a strange dream. How could it be if there is no God?" Sudden revolt from our audacity comes unaware, and we fling ourselves in the green grass and cry out, "But there is! There is!" And somehow, after all our effort, when the psalmist speaks to us, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God," we assent with a groan. O that we might be rid of him! O that he would let us alone! But he will not let us alone. Not a day goes by without a mystery, and something is behind it that we cannot explain until we have uttered the Ineffable Name. We were not quite able, after all, to cast off the moral bond and rush to evil unimpeded. Even the liberty of moral insanity is not ours. Checks and braces and warnings and obstacles heap the ways we run, and though we cannot save ourselves, neither can we escape the impulses to try—the pressure of God, the thrill of the high life, the demand on us that never relaxes. We must be saved; we *must* be.

So springs up the terrible paradox of struggle. We linger in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and cry out in our agony, "Who shall deliver me?" And all because experience has proved that we cannot do it ourselves. And yet this eternal Presence, that keeps us trying, ought from the first to be the assurance that we are not actually left alone to our own striving. No one is alone. If we consider it, partly futile though it be and altogether insufficient, yet

our struggle has been the noblest thing about us. It was cowardly to give it up. Perchance when the rope comes we can take hold upon it and cease swimming. But if the pilgrim, drowning in his quagmire, in his ocean of slime, has not seen the rope, still to struggle and to swim are, at the least, efforts upward. Let us not despise the moral struggle of man. It is only to say that there may be a better method.

It is the instinct of God in us that makes the struggle inevitable. If the flesh wars the spirit wars too. The dreadful case is when the spirit submits and will war no more. Things seem more peaceful—but the dead and rotting dust is peaceful. Peaceful! It is the sign of your godlike powers and heavenly descent that you must struggle, and that you say, under the lure and pressure of the Spirit, "I must be saved." Whoever keeps on saying that will find the way. When, therefore, the theologian says that a man cannot be saved by his own powers we must not allow him to make us believe that we ought to cease the use of our own powers. O, but thy struggles are recorded in heaven, thou striver after good. Perchance thou art weary, and perhaps thou hast seen that thou hast not the clue and cannot climb. It was for this thou hast seemed to be left alone. It was for this that thou hast never been left alone. This is God's paradox, set at the beginning of the Way of Salvation: "I must be saved, yet after all my trying I cannot attain unto the salvation I must reach."

As we walk along under the high canopy of the

clouds and the sky, where the wind blows cobwebs from the brain and the world is free for our inspection, may we not hope to consider clearly these splendid paradoxes of God? Come, journey with me in this open way.

# CHAPTER III

## And Yet We Can, We Can

**In which it is Concluded that, Though We Cannot Alone Save Ourselves, yet it Must be True that in Some Way We Can be Saved.**

---

*"If you were permitted to purchase eternal salvation what would you not give for it? And now you may obtain it; . . . there is nothing can hinder you from acquiring it; neither poverty, nor misery, nor old age, nor any state in life."*

—Clemens Alexandrinus.

*"If we seriously and frequently read the written word, then we have all things necessary for our salvation fully revealed to us."*

—D. Campbell.

Life and death contend. The victory seems to us a matter of faith and of opinion. There was faith in the triumph note of the master apostle when he flung his challenge at the destroyer and cried, "Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory?" Half the world or more (or less) balance the note with the pessimism of Solomon: "Man goeth to his long home," and "All is vanity." "No work, no device, in the grave whither thou goest," wails the unseeing soul. And we all take our choice. Faith is better. Life and death, contending, reveal one certitude. It is the certitude of improvement. Science and religion agree in this. Whether or not life is to conquer in the end, life conquers on the way. It is evident that since it began the

world has been at work producing and finishing lives. And it is evident that the trend of life has been toward the better and the higher. In spite of all contributory death the sequent life has been better than the life surrendered. A bird is better than a sponge, and a man is higher than a bird. If you will have it, then a good and refined man is better than a bad and coarse man. Is it not so?

Admit, with me, that salvation is a high state for man, and we at once reason that the trend of the universe is that way. The universe is engaged in producing high and higher states, and high and higher beings. If the beastlike man is not up to the grade and rank of the spiritual man, then the universal purpose will be to push him up, to lure him up, to teach him that he must go up. That is only to say that it is the intention of the nature of things that we should be saved. The quagmire is unnature; it is contrary to the intention of the universe. To remain as a beast contradicts the impulses of God. Life and death contend, but the universe says to us that the end is life, and more life and better life. The everlasting struggle of an immeasurable history, from atom to man, is struggle to increase and improve life. The inescapable push that compels a sinner to feel God and strive against the beast in him is fragment of a force that is universal, and that underlies the ascent of life everywhere.

Pause not to ask the end of that. We may not linger to consider all the implications of so deep and so high a thought. But it looks as if God thought we might

be saved. The universe has never given you up. God has never given you up. The push, the inescapable force of life is, if we will, the divine certificate of our salvability. When we have rushed out into the sun crying, "Let us be saved," all the world, and all history, and all upward struggling life since time began, join in to answer, "And we can be." Do not doubt it. Look in the face of all that struggles and say, "We *can* be." For, suppose there were no literary revelation, the struggle would be there—in the history of the cosmos and in the history of man. It would be monstrous if you, my friend, and such as you, were to be accounted the only sad exception to things that everywhere can rise from lower to higher. What! and does Nature—not to say God—speak hope to every struggle of bird and beast and only bar the way for the noblest creature of them all? To them is spoken the universal imperative, and they are bidden to come out and grow. To grow they even tear one another, and set aflow a blood stream of carnage that reddens the universe.

Can we not catch some glimpse also of the difference between this order of being that we name Thyself and all things below it? Perchance thou hast even asked the fool's question—whether thou hast a soul. But it was absurd, and we all knew it was absurd. Very possibly thou hast wondered if thy horse and dog have not also a soul. And the mud philosophers—who preach mud because they are so near to mud in their thinking—make precious little difference between Thyself and thy horse or thy dog. Yea, verily, if it came to looking

upon a simian ape they will show in the coccyx of a man a veritable survival and relic of the ape's tail, and look wise and say, "I told you so." But do they rid us of the sense of difference? Not at all. The least self-respecting of us count ourselves to be separated from our dogs by the diameter of infinite variation. Out here under the open canopy of the heavens we are not asking the fool's question, and it matters not a whit to us whether we say "My soul" or whether we say "Myself." We mean something that the ape never meant and never could mean. We mean something so different from apes, and horses, and dogs, and sponges that we coin words to express this somewhat we call Thyself that cannot be used of any other and lower order. We feel the Infinite out here; we can pray. Moral truth is in us and it separates us from the beast. Love plays in its completeness, refined to the sentiment of Plato and purged of the last element of the flesh. And this is higher. So far as we know, this is highest. So far as we can guess, there can be nothing higher. If there be any God he must be like this. Spirit in us is the highest thing there is. Moral law, pure love, intellectual beauty—beyond these things nothing remains; nothing is higher. We have them but mixed, imperfectly, by fragment and glimpse, but we know that they are the best and highest. We also know that if we could have these unmixed, if life were dominated by these, then would we be like God. Then would we be of the highest. And we are certain that if the struggle upward means anything it finally means an attempt to

get, possess, realize, live, and enjoy these things. That would be salvation. That would be heaven. That would be highest life.

Very well. Go back and run the reasoning over. If this is highest life, and if the universe in all its struggle is ever toward the highest, then the purpose of the universe—not to say God—is to produce highest life. Produce it where? In Thyself. That means that the universe—not to say God—makes for salvation. It is the warrant that we *can* be saved. Otherwise we are mocked with universal insanity. The cosmos otherwise is crazed, chaotic, lunatic. For a man may even take down all the staging when the house is done—yes, he may begin before all is done; he may take it down, some of it, and piece by piece throughout all the time he is building—and we do not call this builder erratic. That is what staging is for, just to aid in building the house. And if a man, being a cause, say a builder, would produce a very precious and costly mansion, being the last and best he can do, we say he might take down and destroy very much good staging. It would indeed be rather stupid to keep the staging to encumber the building and hide its ornamentation and deform its proportions. Still, there are fools and some philosophers. They talk and talk. And passing by the palace not yet finished they deplore the staging. They point out the dreadful waste when the staging, no more useful, having served its purpose, is ruthlessly destroyed. Being partly blind, and partly having a stupid pride of mind, they declare that there is no palace a-building;

or, being muddy of intellect, they say that this building and the staging are all of the same stuff, and that the palace is only making in order to go down with the staging.

But the Builder is not lunatic, is not insane, is not satirizing. The palace is better than the staging. We do not expect a sane builder to keep up the staging. But what does the human mind say of the Builder who wastes uncounted ages building, and building, and building, until he has produced the highest, that is, the best, and then turns about and destroys his result? O mockery! It is not so. If there be a Builder, and if the Builder be sane, then the steps that are possible for finishing the highest are possible to all who may contribute to the highest. There can be no bar in the way of the highest. We can be saved. Reason, working beyond the fool's question, tells us that these highest things are of the soul. It is for these highest things the struggle goes on. It is for these the universe was begun. Either this, or we are mocked as vain phantoms that but imagine, and guess, and chatter. Yet of what reasonable value are these highest things if they are barred? Does the struggle mean nothing? Chase butterflies; rush after the rainbow! Let us play the lunatic and contradict the sweet poet to say that life is not real, not earnest. Shall we do so?

But sanity resumes. These things are forces, are realities. They are for us—sometime for us. Thyself hath not been made to revert to the beast. Thyself, the palace of the Builder, must be finished lest the loss

grieve his heart. We know, a little, that the highest things can come to us. Every man snatched at the angel's song once and sang a breath of it. The old teacher, speaking in the old way, pictured the Holy Spirit knocking at the sinner's heart. It was so. But he was not really outside. That was imagery. He was inside. Every man receives a visit some fair day. And by this snatch of the angel's song that sounded in us we knew a little that the high things are not foreign. We could speak with tongues if only we could get on a little. Never was there a sane soul that did not have some affinity with the song; never a pilgrim who could not tell the perfume of the mountain though he has struggled long and climbed little. So is the reason of the case reinforced by the experience of the career. Just the exact actual clue to the riddle of holiness we may have missed, but we know about the riddle. We know there must be a clue. We have edged around it.

Some are fools one way and some another, but most men believe what is nearest. If thou art reasonable thou hast evidence. To the reason of the case and the experience of the career many voices make reinforcement. Allow for sentimental emotions. Eliminate the hypocrisy. Dost thou think so ill of thy fellow-men that thou hearest only a folly and a lie when they rejoice in the highest things, and one says, and another says, "Thou canst be saved"? There is a great belief in the earth. The push upward of life has become so strong in many men that they know without a doubt that henceforth their way is upward. If still they

struggle, the struggle has changed its face. With great unshaken confidence they are able to say, even though the beast can still be heard growling in his jungle, "But I am saved." Doubt that however much one may, since life at the highest is still so poor, nevertheless it proves something. The confidence itself is a weight of judgment that these highest things are not out of reach, and that we can attain unto them. Reduce this testimony to its lowest terms, its lightest form, it is the judgment of the best and wisest of the world that salvation can be attained.

Hope was left in Pandora's box. That was because hope had the potency in it necessary to bring back all the other fleeing gifts of God. Even to hope, therefore, is good. And the universe—not to say God—cannot be essentially a delusion. Hope itself is for leading us. If the universe does not merely mock us this hope we have, that we may some day escape and climb, and sing the angel's full note, is a kind of assurance that somehow we can. It is not possible to be completely a fool, and to say the struggle means nothing. Even in the hope of high things there is the thrill of summer and the sea. While we wander in the cold of arctic selfishness and feel the chill of ice, this longing for the summer, and the feeling that we might have wings to fly, keep us expectant, like the bird that circles the frozen pole. Stagnant in the darkest woodland of unbelief, the solitary sinner feels the ocean in his heart, and in the thrill it gives him he may know that the sea is not far away and that he may run to its embrace.

Else why does the summer perfume come to mock him? Else why is there a salt smell in the air that wafts even to the dark woodland? Reason cannot wrestle with a contradiction so monstrous. Does a fiend taunt us then? Does he tantalize us with snatches of the angel's song that, after all, we could never learn to warble? This were insanity to think, and reason with all her energy flings the paradox away. And it comes out that there is nothing more certain than man's salvability. When God comes and speaks, and we hear the Book declare, "Whosoever will may come," what is it more than ratification? It is the reason of the case; it is the fruit of experience; it is the testimony of the wise and good; it is the certificate of everlasting hope. The summer is for this wandering bird. The sea awaits this solitary spring in the woodland. Let it be that there is no self-power competent to reach the heavenly tropic or run to the embracing deep; still, even in the hour of profoundest weariness, something still cries in us, "I can, and I can."

# CHAPTER IV

## Voices that Must Be Heard

**In which it Appears that, while Men Try Many Things which are Not the Way, They Cannot be Saved by them: The Will Cannot Overcome the Ingrained, the Teaching of the Shadow-makers is Futile, We Cannot Drift into Salvation, We Cannot be Swept Upward with the Crowd Following Inclination, nor be Carried in the Papal, or Ecclesiastical, or Credal Coach; for All These Ways are Not God's One Way.**

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*"You may run from creature to creature, and from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, and when you have wearied yourselves and tired yourselves in seeking ease and rest, satisfaction and remission, justification and salvation, in one way and another, you will be forced after all . . . to cry out, 'No works, no duties, no services, no prayers, no tears, no righteousness, no holiness, but Christ's alone.'"*—Brooks.

Some fresher wind blew across our path in the moment when we lifted up our heads and began to utter the invincible "I can!" But when the wind passed, and it was calm in all the meadows, we thought more about it:

How?

For except ways and means wait on resolution we get nowhere. As for us, our talk will be ended when we have considered How? It was for this alone we came out on the open journey. But face to face with this question we are beset again with our paradox. "I must" and "I can" are straightway attacked. They

are will words, resolution words, late born in human vocabularies. Man's long history has been but a labored learning of these will words. Scarcely can he learn them from any beast below him. Well, your horse has a will, and your dog, but mostly they run under inexorable law and know not how to be free. In their slow passage ages of human discipline have but taught us to swell up a little with a truly human pride and say, "I will." How much larger seems to us the ingrained. The ingrained is nature. The floods of heredity and the force of that we call environment—meaning our neighbor, animate and inanimate—are moving mountains of fact; our late, feeble, struggling passion of freedom is no more than the mound of a pismire in the sand.

Thus, if we were to ask, "How?" the will words cannot greatly inspire us. So soon are we at an end of the present catalogue of our powers! So uncertain is our gait! So erratic is our resolution! And already while we walk under the canopy we have begun to confess that a man is powerless to save himself. Men have tried. It is inevitable that we all try. We will try, and if worst comes to worst we will try all alone (as if we could!) because for one thing, the push of life compels it. Rather, the haunting vision of the mountain will not leave us. It is only to flounder, and fume, and mark time; but even this we will do.

With the breath of the open in our lungs, moreover, we do not always and quickly understand the contrast between the mountain of nature and the pismire mound

of the will. Feeling the primitive touch of freedom in him, a man thinks it is enough. He sets upon his vices savagely, and gloatingly, and feels sure that to-morrow, or next day—at the furthest by next New Year's Day—he will have them all under. He even resorts to a schedule, and catalogues all his sins, and fixes after each one the date of its extinction. That of his sin which is nature he sees only as another aspect of his volition. He thinks his will wrought the sins that are past, and so can his will abolish them for the future. And he is young. What blasting ghoul shall cast contempt on this moral enthusiasm? It is the second glory of the world. Let it be that there is a first glory, even a glory that excelleth, yet I praise the second glory. Moral striving and delusion of ethical sufficiency doth God use to lead the soul up to the greater glory.

It matters not so much that this sinner, cataloguing his sins as if he had wrought them alone, is mad. It is, in the last analysis, a holy madness. And it was the best he knew. He was young. After a time, if he is not too simple, he will grow older, and older he will be wiser. How could he suspect that a catalogue of sins grows faster than it can be extinguished? Experience must teach him this, if he find nothing better to do meanwhile than to mark time against nature. And how can he know that every guile he pits against has power to change color and shift position swifter than a chameleon or a flea? And how can he know, braced as he is to believe that his pismire mound is a complete cosmos, that nature, nay, unnature, is greater than his

pismire mound by so much as the traits and taints of uncounted ages is greater than a will born so late that still it is only a flickering torch in the soul of a man?

He learns this slowly, if he finds no better clue to divert him from his task of counting his sins. He learns it by his repeated disasters. He sits down some morning, when the new sunlight on his head reveals the gathering silver of his age in his thinning hair, and thinks that the sin he yielded to this morning is on a catalogue made when his cheek was smooth and ruddy and springtime was in his heart—and it is still going on. But men will try it. And they ought, and they must. It is the second glory, for by it God is bringing to stability the late-born divinity that is in the growing freedom of the human soul. If it cannot save this man perchance it helps save Man. For it is this utmost struggle of man against the beast which represents the forces that shall destroy the beast. But as yet it acts alone, and acting alone cannot save the sinner.

When the pilgrim asks, How? there are many to tell him. The philosophers are not indifferent to this question, theology never would have been except to answer it. On the whole, however, the answers have been poor. The best one, and the commonest, has been the answer of the will. Let a man paddle his own canoe. A famous evangelist made his permanent mark with the injunction to "quit your meanness." As if that were an offhand task to be finished before breakfast! But there is a modicum of sense in it. It is distinctly worse, both for morals and religion, to advocate

shadows. The advocate of shadows is rampant. So plausible has his speech been in this day we have even consented to argue the case—namely, whether a shadow is something, and whether something is a shadow—and it is a discussion that has dignified itself with the most pompous of terms. As usual, it has masked itself with the Bible and stolen heaven's livery. In this light, or say this darkness, all that we talk about, out here under the open canopy, is nonsense. There is no struggle, there is no sinner, I am not a sinner, God is All. Our somethings are all shadows, and the shadows—namely, a denial and an affirmation—these are the Something of the universe. We have simply been fooling. Fooling ourselves! God cannot sin, God alone is real, therefore sin must be a shadow.

Fortunate is man to have been born sane! Being sane, he knows that there is Something, and that his sin is Something. Still, it is seen by the wise that this vapor, not thick enough to be mud, yet thick enough to hide the sun, deludes some. Better that a man were already in hell than to lose sight of the struggle and the necessity for it. False prophets, who have on them the guilt of those who call evil good or say it is nothing, bar the way to the soul who begins to say, "I can." Scarcely could this be deemed an effort toward salvation. But it is a sort of interpretation of the problem. It is wound up and implicated with a therapeutic that has attracted some. If it has reminded us that we may not be morbid, and fill ourselves with only imaginations of our sinfulness, on the other hand what distor-

tion of reality it proposes! To the robust realism that asserts, "There is something the matter," it raises a clamor of transcendental denial. The sinner hopes it may be as they say. He can hope it enough to abandon sanity and to say, "Then why struggle?" Yea, if God is All, and this we call sin is merely a thought of the mortal mind, a shadow, let us think it away! The struggle has always been a process based in delusion. Christ's cross was a delusion. All is well; why talk of being lost? why talk of being saved? These are old-time platitudes, and the new "science of health" (save the mark!) makes them meaningless.

Let us not pretend that we understand all this. There can be no reasoning with fog. But out here in the open, where we journey in sight of both the quagmire and the mountain, we are able to look down as well as up, and we draw in our breath normally and say, "Here is divine reality." There is struggle. There is sin, failure, defeat, sickness, death; and these somethings are not shadows, they are Somethings. I can ask the question, How? and having asked it my sanity is at stake on a sane answer. I feel my right to ask, How? as a question that concerns a real quagmire and a real mountain. And while I am sane, and can breathe in the air on my open journey, I can never rest in the answer of the shadow makers—that is, the fog generators. I could not have asked the question were I able to believe that there is nothing the matter with me. Thyself is not a shadow, and Thyself can never feed on fog. And it is Thyself that feels, and never

escapes, this tremendous antithesis of good and evil. God is not all. Thyself is a Something, yea, a Some One, and Thyself it is who feels the shock and reality of sin. Thyself asks the question, and knows every moment that these tremendous somethings are no shadows. Sin is sin, and life is life, and death is death, and when Thyself asks, How?—the how of the passage from death to life, the how of the method of salvation —Thyself, being sane, must be answered in sane terms. Let the shadow logicians retire.

Yes, a man will try the problem. Some answer every man seems to give when you ask him how you may be saved. There are also advocates of the drift: Follow inclination. Sometimes in a nobler phrase they tell us to live according to nature. "According to nature!" That sounds better, and might have more in it, than the mere advice to go as you please. Often it means the same thing. By and by we may come upon the universal truth that holds this partial truth in its bosom, but the philosophy that lies in it is mostly the philosophy of weariness. There comes a time when drifting seems the wisdom of heaven. In our youth time we listened with cheeks aglow to the teachers who came out on the green bank and shouted lustily to our strength. They cried, "Paddle your own canoe," and we bent to the oars with hope in the heart, saying to ourselves that we would soon float on the great sea. But the teachers themselves grew old, and when they came across us again there were no more green banks, there was no more straight course of the untainted

river. Indeed, they have only happened on us by accident; they never could have hunted us out by purpose, for we are not yet in the sea. Reedy wastes inclose us. Bayous of level dreariness, yellow and muddy, ooze along among the thick swamp rices. We have not kept the stream. We are lost in the bayous. It is a hollow voice that echoes from the reeds, where the scared pelican rises with heavy wings to sail out into the hazy west. And now no longer does it set us bravely to the oars. Why paddle here? It is only to be more drearily lost. Let the boat drift.

The crowd is always moving somewhere. The native inclination of our gregariousness, dignified in man to a social instinct, points out our path. We talk of *zeitgeist,* and coming to think that environment is all and the soul nothing we do as the Romans do. We discredit originality: we cannot really afford to be cranks; singularity is uncomfortable, and the philosophers, or some of them, have made us believe that we can go up if only we will keep in the push. The push is social waste, dissipation of the whist table, the raw fiber of unregulated inclination. To "go as you please" —that is one idea of progress. At bottom it may assent when we say there is something the matter with us, but it will reply that we have only to let things alone, and go along with the others, and we shall come out right. That appeal is too often irresistibly powerful. It speaks to the inertia of our weariness, tired in the struggle to be good. Thyself greatly likes to do as thou wilt. And if that should chance to be the road up

—ending in the highest—how fortunate when inclination and duty meet and agree! And this is the answer of Inertia when thou askest, How? And if there were nothing essential the matter it might be true. It might be true if there were no lower and higher; especially if there were no lowest and highest. But there is; there are. And through our soul is run the fiber of sane intellect that forever comes back to the knowledge that mere drift is always drift downward. For one thing, the crowd itself is no merely homogeneous current. It is made up of strong and weak, where by mere inclination the strong prey. And perforce on that basis only the strongest can come out at the top. There is a top to the crowd, doubtless, but even that, undesirable as it may be, is not reached by the go-as-you-please method. The drift is always downward. Whoever goes up will soon leave the crowd, and by struggle. So reason shows that with the crowd, and surrendered to the *zeitgeist* we revert, and the question is not answered.

We have seen this method extended. There are some who will take charge of us and pull us along. The chief puller presents his toe to you in the porches of the Vatican. Far down this scale you imagine that your preacher ought to see to it. Isn't your name on the church roll? What for unless it be a certificate, that is, an admission ticket, to the highest? Into whose care have you put this soul of yours? There are various kinds of stages, and cars, and even recently we have seen automobiles. What is the driver for, and the

motorman, and chauffeur, but to take charge of us, and get us to the end of the journey? And Rome says that the chief coach of all, run by a Nicholas, or a Pius, or a Hildebrand, runs straight up to the gate. All aboard! —otherwise we will not even bury your dust in our consecrated ground.

Well, let us reflect. Have the creedists been clear? Have they sometimes claimed wheels for their coach as infallible as your mitered prophet chanting dead languages in a cloister? Which coach shall we choose? And when we walk under the open canopy, and seriously ask, How? are we at an end of our discontent when the coach drives up and the ecclesiastical Jehu cries out, "All aboard!" and assures you that he has the only strictly through line to the mountain top? Well, some think so. Many are trusting to the coach. Even between the coach and the car, and between the car and the motor carriage, they stop history to debate the merits of the carriages, and even burn each other and torture each other on the way, in their rivalry of bigots. The debate echoes down to our time, and there still be some who think the coach is more than the passenger and can actually answer the question when the soul asks, How? But to whom shall we confide ourselves?

And yet again the sanity fibered and fixed in the human mind repudiates this answer. Thyself, asking this important question, soon comes to know, as the growing ages of Christendom come slowly to know, that we must go afoot. We must unless we can get wings, and wings of our own. Let no man wait for

the flying machine. It will avail nothing for overflying the battlements of the higher into the citadel of the highest. We must go afoot. We must settle the problem ourselves. At any rate, no human driver, whether at the Vatican or in the historic machine of Geneva, can get us up there in his coach. Have we settled that? Here under the open canopy of stars let us confess our distrust of the coaches; let us disbelieve a little in the efficacy of the crowd; let us not abandon our oars in the hope that the drift is potent and sufficient; let us assert our sanity over against the shadow makers; let us even get back to our cataloguing and striving against the sins and the unnature and say that this, too, fails.

What, then! Are we at the end of the question? Must we give it up? Is there no sufficient answer when a man asks, How shall I be saved?

Surely there is; surely there must be.

# CHAPTER V

## THE WAY OF THE OTHER

**In which it Appears that Reason and Experience Unite in Making it Certain that God Himself will Provide, and has Provided, a Way of Salvation.**

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*"God is the Father of lights, and therefore the best way to be enlightened is to have recourse unto him, in and through Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the world. In his light we shall assuredly see light."*—INCREASE MATHER.

IN the open way we have room to think of that which is not Thyself. It would be strange if it had not occurred to us that there may be a way that is not originally our own way. Why should we think our How? is not to be answered merely because it seems not to be answerable by our own way? We have room to think of the Other. Perhaps the Other has a way. The same fool who goes about asking if we have a soul sometimes will argue with you that there is no Other. But we who feel the fiber of the soul's sanity, and know that things are real, know also that there is, and must be, an Other. We did not just happen out here. The canopy over us we did not make. And it is hard to believe that the canopy happened, and the breeze, and the sun, and all that is. We do not even tarry to answer the fool when he stops us in the way and says, "But perhaps there is no God."

Let us begin farther on. Let us take the risk and believe that God made the canopy, and that somehow he made us too. Otherwise why talk at all? We waste the breath of a mortal who has but a few breaths more before the end if we talk about salvation in a universe where no God is. But we at least suspect that he is, and it is worth while to go about the question of salvation. Starting from that, it is also worth while to inquire whether God might not be suspected of having a way. Let it be so that we find no device as yet in answering our question, How? That may only be because we left out the Other. God may have a way. And, now we think of it, it might easily happen that his way is better than any other. Let us work that clue. It only is necessary to confess that there is an Other. We cannot stop after that. After that we quickly run on and we say that the Other must know more than we. He must be stronger than we—especially if it is he who spreads this canopy under which we journey. Did he set the sun up there, and the stars that shone last night? O, the Other! Why did we not remember the Other!

We can go far ahead in our logic if we choose. We are not bound to make all our steps even while we walk and talk under the open heaven. And we shall not by and by contradict our best conclusions if we declare that the Other is interested in this world. What joy lies in the holy pride of workmanship. What! Has he made the world and cares nothing for it? That were preposterous. We might abandon sanity and say

he is not. We might shut up our soul in a cage, or a box, and say he did not make the world and it isn't his. But out here under the canopy, with the sane fiber felt in our nature, we cannot say these things; and if we must believe that he is, and that he made the world, then it were more foolish yet to say he does not care for it, that he takes no interest in it. But if we look along the ancient ways we find the tokens of his interest. There have been wondrous marks of the Other, more than any finite mind can count and inspect. And one story, recently told, gloriously begins to inform us of the reason of creation. It is the story of progress in making and caring for. The Other has seemed very prodigal of the staging. He has thrown down vast wastes of it since time began, but he has cared incredibly for the palace that he is building. The farther it gets along the more minute, complex, and wonderful does his interest seem. He takes but a little pains with the sponge, and scarce more with the jungle monsters sweating on planets as they cool; but when the time comes for the mammal's latest baby to emerge into life he brings him in alone and sets about him the modern safeguards—from the doctor to the nursing bottle. And the higher life goes the more God cares.

What, then, about your question of the highest? This Other, who labors for unknown ages to bring in the late-born will, and the love of truth, and a being who can pray, does he not concern himself about your "How"? Does he labor from the dawn of eons merely on crabs and sponges now to spurn the highest?

And, my friend, if this question, How shall I be saved? concerns you, out here under the open canopy, why should you not believe that more agonizingly it must concern the Other, whose workmanship is at stake and whose heart is at stake, that this question be answered successfully?

Yes, the Other cares. It is because he cares that he makes you care. If he did not care you never would have cared. You never would have set upon asking and answering the question. It is the prod and sting of the Other that compels your discomfort when this question attacks you. There is a Holy Ghost in the inner holy of the heart, and this too is the Other, speaking of the mountain and luring you to heaven. God, the Holy Ghost, cares! This life push that lies under you, this too is only the Other. You cannot remain a beast, and you cannot give up the struggle, just only because the Other cares. He cares! He would not care if you were merely staging, as perhaps the crab, and the sponge, and the starfish are. But because you are part of the palace he must not lose you—must not while any hope remains; will not, unless you at last succeed in reverting to something unspeakably worse than the sponge or the starfish and are no longer possible material for the Holy Temple that he builds. The Other has intentions. A being who has not or cannot have intentions would be either unmoral, and less than intelligent, or a mere congeries of caprice. But any being who has intentions, and who proceeds to do things, will show his intentions in what he does, or

makes, or utters. If God has intentions they must appear in what he seems to be doing. If he seems to be building the highest, that is to say, spiritual realities, in Thyself, then these realities, on the whole, represent the intentions of God. These are they for which all other works of God exist. These being highest, and latest, and to the mind unsurpassable, then it must be that God cares for these highest things more than for any others anterior or lower. Spiritual realities in Thyself, and in beings like thyself, are the things God finally intends.

But, if that be so, how absurd to imagine that God has no way of accomplishing his intentions. How absurd, that is, is the oversight of the sinner who studies all the other ways and inspects all his own devices and never thinks to inquire in what way God intends to save a man. For thy salvation is not merely a fragile, unstable purpose of thy will; it is from eternity the holy, set, infrangible intention of God—with conditions, it may be, of which we may speak otherwhere, but still his intention. And not only so, but being a process of producing the highest it must be God's main intention. For this all other intentions become the staging. For this all other products stand only as the auxiliaries.

It need not perplex us that we have not immediately found the Other's way. Perchance one of the conditions of finding this way and finally choosing it might be that we must first try the other ways, and see where they lead and how they fail. At all events, this long

groping of the soul in ways that are not God's proves nothing against my suggestion that God has a way. It is something that men have seriously confessed this fact. It is of some weight, with those who credit the wisdom of their fellow-men, that many wise, and good, and great, who believe they have found peace, walked in a way they thought was God's way. And that they have pointed it out and made it part of the great body of Christian truth is a fact not lightly to be dismissed. We may grant that these holy teachers were not altogether holy. We may concede that they did not give evidence of perfection. They had not actually reached the highest under human observation. If they sometimes seemed to see high things, with Paul, that it appeared not lawful for human tongue to utter, one could not say they lived up to these high moments. Even Paul himself had some sharp contentions, and wrote the seventh chapter of Romans. Nevertheless their testimony is valuable.

It is valuable to know that men had assurance. That is more than thou hast, who know not yet whether thou art sinking or climbing. The holy ones of past ages, and of to-day also, have not indeed reached the highest, but they know their course. They know that they "press on." They know there is a crown "laid up." Yea, they can sing. This is not testimony that they see all things "put under," but they "see Jesus." They know that there is no more a quagmire under their feet. They have foundations. And they speak with no uncertain note when they point and say, "This is the

way." If it is in the reason of the case that God has a way, then we shall listen when the best souls we know point it out. If we are interested in this question "How?" as we walk here under the canopy we shall not hear any answer with levity, especially after it has occurred to us that the question we could not answer ourselves may, after all, have been answered by the Other. And when we stop to think of our own career shall we not be indorsed in our opinion? Have we not been guided? No matter where we walked, nor whether we paddled or drifted, we have not escaped crossing the divine way. After all, it needs not that men shall point it out to prove to us that God has a way. This drawing of the magnetic mountain, whose perfume is in the soul, is proof that we were made to go up and that there is a path. Why should we be driven out of our inertia, and forced to effort, except effort were decreed by the Other? And the fact that we must hunt through every labyrinth, searching for a path, proves the ineradicable certainty that there is one.

Crossing it so often, sometimes we felt that we were in it, or almost in it. How many souls gave up once, for a moment, for an hour, the selfish power in them, and in a generous moment of love felt that God drew nigh. It was but a glimpse, a flash in the midnight, but with you, my friend, it was enough to suggest to you what peace and glory there might be. And that was a foot or two of God's way. The sweet strange perfumes that swept by you in that rapt moment came from the paradise flowers that spring from the renewed

earth. It was easy and splendid then to be good. The waft of a song moved you to this, or the memory of the infant prayer, where in the soft twilight, years ago, you knelt to join the low sweet voice of your mother while you said with a child's trust:

> "Now I lay me down to sleep;
> I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take."

There has not been much of that experience, maybe. But a sample proves something. If God cares God has a way, and that is the reason of the case. Testimony reinforces what we could not reasonably doubt. And more convincing yet are the soul's own glimpses and the perfume. These all may stand with another consideration: God is not a congeries of caprices. The Other, if he really made the canopy under which we pursue our open journey, and the sun, and the stars also, must be a Being of method. We can trace his ways a little. We know when he wants a crab he makes him, and makes him by a method. The steps can partly be traced, and they are rational and wonderful. There was probably only one way that was best for making a crab, a sponge, or a star. Reason, following out the process, as it reads God's thoughts after him, assents to the wonderful fact that God made the sponge, the crab, the star, by interesting rational processes, and in doubtless the best way. And no scientist doubts that he had a way.

Given a rational God, and we shall expect him to

have a way. He will not leave the crab to complete himself in his own way, no matter how many ways the foolish animal may search for. He can only become a crab in God's way. There is nothing that comes to its stature, where it can fulfill its end, except in the way God points out and provides. For the present that only means to us that God, in making everything we see in the cosmos, pursues a way. Why should we think it would be different in producing the highest, say, in Thyself? Why should we be foolish and think that God, who does never leave anything else to itself, has left a man to himself? Why should we go about making our own ways, and trying our own devices, without taking into account that with everything else God has a way of his own? True, a man is freer than a crab, and can do things. And he might discover some things that a crab could not. But not only has he not rid himself of God, but he knows that God has far more to do with him than with a crab.

Reckon with the Other, my friend. Asking all thy questions, fail not to ask the last one. When thou askest the last one, turn the eyes upward. If thou art afraid, veil thy face and put off thy shoes from off thy feet. Wait until the clamor is ended. Separate from the crowd. Get through with the shadow makers. Come out here under the open canopy, where there is a fresh odor in the breeze wafted from the shining mountain, and in the silence, where thy soul can hear and be heard, ask thy question. Lo! may it not be the echo of history: Once it was asked with doubting,

"Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" But once it was asked under the blaze of an open sky, by the trembling lips of a sinner, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Let us talk about the way of the Other.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE WAYFARING MAN, THOUGH A FOOL, SHALL NOT ERR THEREIN

In which We are Assured that God, who Has His Own Way of Saving Men, will Not Conceal it, but will Make it Known, and Make it Plain.

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*"Look above you, and in the overarching firmament read the truth of an all-pervading Providence. Yon sky is God's outspread hand, and the glittering stars are the jewels on the fingers of the Almighty."*—GILL.

*"When a kind parent sends to his distant child a case of curious mechanical instruments he takes care to send along with them printed directions for use. Even such a set of directions has our Father in heaven sent to us along with the case of cunning instruments which our living body contains."*—ANON.

LITTLE children go about delighting to mystify us. Each will say to the other, "I know something you don't know." But some in the house, older and wiser, smile at this, and conclude easily that if it were of really pressing importance this mighty secret would soon utter itself. It is merely a way of children.

Hardly do we believe that God treats us so. Sometimes he does, on the mere outward appearance of the case. That is to say that he is constantly whetting curiosity and leading us by fond illusions. Even this were bad child's play were it not that we find out that God is not merely playing hide and seek with us, and

that in the heart of every fond illusion rests some fragment of eternal truth. We tarry in the illusion, perchance, and are disappointed that all is not exactly as we hoped. Yet it will matter less to us if we find that we got on a little. It will utterly console us if we discover the fragment. Every divine illusion is for the fragment. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth"—that is the illusion. Well for us if we find after they are gone that fragment in them of the "word of God" that "endureth forever." So is it of our human experiments answering the imperative "How?" of human salvation. Illusive, elusive they are, but if they have revealed while they lasted a fragment of the divine way, and revealed the Other working, they are not in vain. Great are their uses if they drive us utterly to the higher ground of faith in the way of God.

He plays not hide and seek with us. He made us not to chase butterflies in the sun. What he wills is not *ignes fatui* flashing in a marsh. Else were we mocked to know that he has a way that no man can find and that no power reveals. Then were it better we were never forced to say that God cares, and that he has a way. God does not perk and fling jibes. He does not say, "Ah! I know something!" He does not hint and simper. Be sure if he has a way, then he opens it. How robust is the faith that writes to us that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. God is frank and confidential with us. He comes out into the open and speaks. He even agonizes

to make us understand him. He utters a million voices for our million moods, and never stops speaking. He will not have secrets. All the ages are only a turning out before us of the deep and sweet thoughts of God. And still they are coming. And, one way or other, they are all about his way. From end to end they are about that. Into that all the languages run, whether spoken by man or beast or angel; whether uttered by prophet or by Balaam's ass. The sun in his circuit from end to end of the heavens and the sweet influence of Orion and the Pleiades agree in the uttering and outing of this great and final word of the Other. From eternity, when the morning stars sang, to the end when the ransomed shall sing in heaven, one voice speaks, and it is all finally a story of the way. Say not that this too is illusion. It is the fragment, and it is in everything. It is the word of God.

In that sense we might almost use of him that modern word, and say that from himself God evolves, that is to say, unrolls, or unfolds increasingly while ages run, this expression of himself. In this sense we might even understand that modern tale of "progressive revelation." The theologians were early to see that the inanimate and animal universe were speaking of God's way. Did not Jesus hint that in his lesson of the lily and the sparrow? And did not Paul make it the basis of a stupendous argument, under which even those who had no Mosaic law were left without excuse? And many think that way. They call our attention to a certain "light of nature," hold-

ing that it is, anyway, enough to get home by. Thou canst not deny this word. There is witness of God's way in the make-up of the world, and so that the way is not hidden even to the Hottentot. The Hottentot rises in judgment against the hide-and-seek theology and could tell you that God has spoken. Even in Africa's sands God does not peep and mutter and say, "I know something."

Nature teaches us that order is divine. And showing this it says with every orderly breath, "Put in order thy house, O man!" And it does more than to show the requirements. It shows how. Jesus knew this secret. He saw God's lesson of submission and of faith in the uncomplaining lily. And the apostle, thinking perhaps of this luminous imagery, gave us only nature's clue when he said, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." We may by and by see that this message of the cosmos, and the message of the finest theology, and of the writing, are one. They agree in demanding of man that he set himself in order, and they agree in asking first his childlike submission to the Other, who is speaking the message.

There are resonant chambers where all messages are received. What does the Other speak in the resonant chamber? I will not affirm that this is an inner holy, for I would not controvert with some who say it is an inner unholy. But there is a resonant chamber, and in this God speaks. Not to Thyself alone. He speaks also to him, and to me. There is a universal speech of the Holy Ghost that makes God's way known. Give

it a name if thou wilt. Yet it is not merely that which they call the conscience. It is Thyself, considered as an inner somewhat. It is Thyself, in all thy receptive faculties. And through this resonant chamber rolls forever the voice of God.

Let it be admitted that other voices speak here; only assert that God speaks too. Before written revelation could be possible God must have been heard in the resonant chamber. And, if this be so, true revelation is there and not elsewhere. The written record of this may be important beyond all computation, but it could never have been written if, first, the facile and passive prophet had not hearkened to the Other speaking in the resonant chamber. And his speech here is the lily speech. It is the Pauline speech. It is somewhat the credal speech, and even the echo of good poets is heard. That is to say, it is speech of God's way. "Their own hearts also accusing or else excusing"—what is this but the holy judgment that the seat of revelation is in the resonant chamber, and that God's way is made known in the still small voice? How, pray, did the elect find out? How did Moses know? Where did the ancients hear God, and those to whom God came in the pagan world—Cornelius? Plato? the just Joseph of Arimathea? Besides, we do not need the history to teach us this. No man has ever escaped hearing God. And no man has ever failed to get good vision of God's way. They are all without excuse. Not all equally, perhaps, but there is light enough here also to get home by.

Strange that we miss a plain way. Strange that we hear not or heed not the holy voice in the resonant chamber. But a little we do hear. Whenever we listen we might hear. Yet that would not save us alone. We must choose, and "there are others." So that it does not follow that God plays hide and seek in the resonant chamber merely because we have not found and walked in the way of the Other. So far as we say "conscience" we say that God makes his way known. It is to begin to make known a path of the perfume if only Some One shuts up the forbidden path. At the least this speaking in the resonant chamber is prohibitory. Known as conscience, it warns us from the forbidden. The forbidden! Of this conscience is always reminding us. Thou art made to go up, and go up—and here, where thou standest, looking off from thy small eminence, thou knowest that thou canst go down. And in the thought of going down, before the act, in time to be effective, this voice in the resonant chamber cries "Halt!" Give it a little time and it will furnish reasons. No man is near thee. No book is teaching thee. The wind is calm, and all outwardly is well. Then why must thou parley with a mere voice in the resonant chamber? Yet the dialogue occurs. The voice will speak. On the red right hand it cries out, and Lady Macbeth, not to say Cassius, and Brutus, and Richard envisioned by ghosts, cowers and debates with the mere Voice.

"Makes cowards of us all," says the wise bard. Yes, and beforehand! Tarquin at midnight pauses at the

deed he will do. Humanity is desiccated out of those historic monsters who seem to us to have abandoned conscience. We abhor those who can no longer hear and who will no longer regard the monarch of the resonant chamber. If man would but heed! For here is negative revelation. Here is the hedging up of the other paths. Over conscience must one go, crushing on, who means to "climb up some other way." And, doubtless, when conscience says "Thou shalt not" it goes far toward showing us the true path. If we kept out of the bypaths, and sought diligently the instruction of this monitor of the chamber, surely we should find in this the accents of God. We should find that he who keeps out of all the wrong ways is very near to the right way.

Conscience could not speak without the aid of experience and memory. In the resonant chamber rise and float the visions of past retributions. These bypaths prove themselves. They have not been so smooth as they looked, have they, my friend? How far must the soul wander before he comes to know that he is mired, and labyrinthed, and tangled? Not far, not far. Memory, speaking with conscience in the resonant chamber, rehearses the story of thy failures. We have not got on. There is trouble about it. Our devices have not worked well. They have not worked well enough. One breath, or two, of the heavenly perfume, swept up to us on the way, has become a haunting argument to us that we are out of the way. "Remember not, O Lord, the sins of my youth!" Well, but

thou dost thyself remember them. And thou hast not found out yet what to do with them. Memory, sounding in the resonant chamber, rehearses their story. "Remember not past years," prays the soul. But past years should at least teach thee this, namely, whether thou hast been walking with God. And, if God seems not yet to have made known his one way, at the least thou hast learned the ways that are not his. That is much. And so, in a sort, God is taking the first steps to warn thee into the true way. And this is revelation.

Nor has God trusted us wholly to the teaching of nature and the powers of the resonant chamber. Thou hast the Book. Nor can I reopen the controversies. There are all sorts of critics, and they say all kinds of silly things. Some of them say wise things. And we all interpret out of our own history, experience, mental habits, fads, theologies, parties. I do not blame the sinner if he says, "All these things confuse me." But why should not one have sympathy for a Book that has been so badly treated? Let us not care for that. If we began to talk out here, on our open journey, of the Book, and all that is said of it and all that has been done to it, there would not be room and there would not be time. But here at least we agreed to be simple and to practice on essentials, and there is agreement on the essentials. The highest things are in the Book. With all strifes of tongues—from which, good Lord, deliver us!—we have found it agreed by the innumerable wise and good of many centuries that in the Book is the way of God revealed. Some think if it were cut

down to the third chapter of the gospel of John the way might be found by the wayfaring man, though a fool, from that leaf alone.

It has passed beyond doubt with good men that from the Book a man can find God's way revealed. Many will farther go, and are ready to affirm, with overwhelming proofs behind them, that from the Book a simple man, able but to read, may find all there is in the resonant chamber and all there is in the voice of nature. From this alone, they will tell you, black pagans in Africa and learned pagans in Japan and masses of pagans in all lands have learned the way and found peace.

And, if this were not enough, hear the Church. Truly, most men are very simple and need the preacher. Generally we rely on some one else. It is not that we ought to get aboard the coach and be carried. But we are as the eunuch whom Philip instructed: how can we believe except some man show us the way? And there are plenty. A prophet is born every moment. It is absurd to scoff at the preacher. If we see no salvation making in the earth it is not because there is no one to teach it. On the whole, the Church teaches it, and it only needs that a sinner take some interest in the matter. He need not thence be troubled about some one to instruct him. If it should happen that he has misread the message of nature, and cannot clearly hear the voices in the resonant chamber, and is confused about the Book, still will I, and you the Christian, and you the Sunday school teacher, and

you, and you, to the end of an innumerable catalogue, will we all unanimously teach this inquirer that there is a way, and mostly we will be agreed, too, as to everything this inquirer needs to know.

That is the glorious challenge of Christendom. So still does it hold, not in the hand of any sectarian apostolical succession either, the key of the kingdom of God, the gate of the Holy Way.

# CHAPTER VII

## "Strait Is the Gate and Narrow the Way"

**In which it is Shown that God Has but One Way, and that Man Must be Saved in that One Way or Not at All.**

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*"Truth is but one; error endless and interminable."*
—Leighton.

*"God is wiser than I am. He knoweth the way, . . . the way home. He is mightier than I am. . . . He is better than I am. . . . He is more holy than I am. . . . He is more faithful. He asks me nothing but time and trust in order to make the whole plain and gracious to my eye."*—Cecil.

The mind is a point. Man, the little finite, gazing at God, the great Infinite, can think but one thought at a time. Therefore this little finite was not made for the labyrinth, he was made for the narrow way. He can only count as far as one. God knows this, and so he ever has sought to fix man's attention on just the One Way. It is from this we understand why he cuts us off from the paths of the labyrinth. He would narrow us to the one path.

It is a hard saying of Jesus, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads unto life," but it had to be so. It must be, because man can only count one. To get anywhere means a certain line. At noon, standing on a high mountain where the ray is not refracted—that is to say, bent from its right line—we

could only reach the sun, supposing it to be stationary, by following this light beam shot against the eye. Deviate here a millioneth part of the diameter of a hair and you may wander forever in black endless spaces and never reach the heavenly luminary. Is not the way to the Great Light as sure as this? Let us not find fault with God. It could not be otherwise. By infinite numbers of paths might we miss the sun, but only by one could we reach it. Heaven is not different in this from any place of destination. Else why do men build roads at all? Especially, why do they set up guide-posts? Every road is not bound to go everywhere. It is enough for a sane mind if each goes somewhere, and at every turn of the road you must take your choice. It is unreasonable to wish to go to hell and to heaven by the same road. Yet some say, "If only we could!"

We are not ordinarily offended at decision. It is a virtue. We like it. Why, then, find any fault when God says, "This is the way; walk ye in it"? Shall he be, then, a mere congeries of caprice? No, indeed! We feel no respect for a Deity that points two ways. A weather vane has excellent qualities, but it does not make the wind blow. It only shows how it blows—that is, its direction. But the wind itself may blow from every quarter to every quarter and we care not. And if Thyself be only a breath, then, again, whither thou goest we care not. But God thinks not so. Thyself is actually the palace he means to build. Thyself is he for whom every other thing—which is to say, all the staging—has been perfected. And God, who

cares some, yet but a little, for the staging, cares infinitely for thee, and so he cares whither thou goest. Thence it will follow that he cannot point two ways. He has made up his mind. The soul of man is not really certified of any sane thing until it has become certain to the soul that God has made up his mind. All this casting about to find some several of many other ways is the proof that we have not yet believed that God has decided. If we were certain that he had decided we would not watch the weather vane. For here is a wind that never blows east. It always blows west—that is to say, toward the end. The crimson light of the sunset lies there. There are towers of glory and incredible radiance. And toward this, for thee and for me, God has made up his mind. No man will ever find him pointing east, not even southeast. For what would happen to this old world if God were a Being to point two ways? How, like smoke, it would soon dissolve in chaos! He pointeth not so the courses of the sun, and somehow at last all things that do not resist him go as it is written of them. Splendid and terrible is that old utterance of the inspired one: "Not yea and nay, but yea and Amen."

Underneath the seeming all things go with God. All *things*—that is to say, all forces set under law and working without resistance. It is only a man's misseeing, his perversion of the eyes, that halts him in the vain idea that there are other ways. As men with cross-eyes, or men who are drunken, he imagines that these are true paths. He staggers into them. He runs

carelessly and forgets his bearings. Yet even here in the bypath, if he only knew it, there is always a guide-post at the turn by which the finger pointing west shows him homeward. Thou hast passed by several of them on thy drunken wandering, my friend. Perchance there are more. For that which God does all the world does too. There is a vast consensus of spiritual forces and they all point west. If thine eyes were clear of the film thou wouldest see that even thy pangs point west. When the briers tear thee in the lonesome bypath they mean only to make thee look west—that is, toward the illuminated sunset and the good end. It is well for a man, well for a sinner, if there be briers, yea, even spike thorns, and the sting and terror thickening and attacking all along the bypath. Else, if it were somewhat comfortable, the sinner goes on saying it is a pretty good way.

Contrariwise, when the bypath is pleasant why do we not see that this is because there is so much of the western light on it? God is indeed decisive, and he points but one way; nevertheless he casts light, and a great deal of it, on the other ways. Sometimes he lights them enough to show their terrors and pitfalls. Sometimes he lights them to show us how nearly parallel they run to the one way, and to show us how easily, if we will clear our eyes and our brain and our soul, we might take a crosscut into the true way. Did not One say to the young patrician of the ancient day, "Verily thou art not far from the kingdom of God"? Perchance thou art not far. Nevertheless there is no

parallel path. That which seems parallel is so divergent that at the end all space is between. Thou canst reach heaven and also hell by two paths that diverge no more than a hair. Are there not stars so distant that the longest diameter of the earth's orbit is not sufficient to cast their parallax? Yet two beams of light from those stars fall as wide apart as the longest diameter of the orbit of the earth—and even wider, since we cannot measure them.

So strict with us is God. What! and will he not let us deviate one little hair's breadth? Must we not search a little? Here are a hundred ways that look right. I might get up there on the will line, or on the nature line, or on the drift line, or on the Vatican coach. But God is stern, and he faces us with an undeviating imperative: "This is the way; walk ye in it." But, as we have said, this is because he *cares*. The anxiety of infinite love is under the sternness and the strictness of God. He wants thee to get home. He even uses goads and stings. He whispers and he implores. If earthquakes must be used, even these shake us. The resonant chamber echoes, and the cosmos agonizes to have thee get home. And we are so careless we will not even lift up our eyes to look at the guidepost. Yes, whether we like it or not, God is strict. When he makes or moves anything anywhere he does it by strict methods. I cannot say, nor can you, how much is meant by the "unity of the universe" and the "inviolability of law;" but we, believing in God—that is to say, being theists—acknowledge that God is not ca-

pricious. So far as he reveals his methods to us they are strict methods. If the world is to be believed, then he would rather let a flower perish than to make it grow by miracle. If the gardener will not water it God allows the drought to kill it. All things must get on in his way or they do not get on; they die. God is strict to the end. Jesus may go to his glory, but not unless he drink the cup. The agony of Gethsemane is the terrifying testimony that God has a way, and only one way, and that he who would go into his glory must walk that way, even though his brow sweat the blood drops and the passage is a cross.

Ought not this to suggest to us, as we think clearly, out here under the canopy, that salvation is of some importance? If God is as strict about it, and will show but one way, then he must have made it a matter of thought and he must have decided that this is necessary. And this may be a divine conclusion only because the thing God is producing is strictly the highest. Do we not see that to get something less than the highest we might take a hundred different ways? But as there can be but one highest, so there could conceivably be but one way to it. Jesus understood this. He dared everything upon this proposition. He did not hesitate to teach that his Gospel meant absolute perfection, even the perfection of God himself. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"—what a program for Thyself! Think that God will not at the outset propose anything meaner for thee, for Thyself, than to be as high as he is! Now, if he means

that much, it stands to reason that Thyself can be no small matter about which he cares little.

Possibly, one might think God might be a little careless about some of the lower things. So he might if they were for themselves, for comparatively they do not seem to be worth much. If the snail or a starfish were just merely for his own sake it were difficult to understand why the great Infinite should take pains with him; and when we see that even with the snail and the starfish there are marks of great pains and age-long care to perfect we take a jump with the reason and say, "Certainly it was not for their sake." Nor unless God is merely selfish, was it merely from pride of workmanship and for his own single glory. It must be because he was practicing. Or it must be that these were a link in a chain. These and a million more that fill the earth are only staging, my friend. Yet because they are staging to a palace, and the palace is the last sole pride of God's heart, to fail in which were to fail utterly, then he takes pains even with the snail. But, even were he a little careless with the snail, what should we think of God were he careless with the highest—or if he were careless about the way to the highest?

And so, if God would have us perfect, ought we not to think he will properly be very strict about the way? And especially ought we to think that he will be when we have said that there can only be possible one way to the highest. Even for Jesus to say, "Be ye perfect," was equal to saying, "There is only one way for thee."

And thereafter forever all human devices that do not discover this way are ruled out. There can be attempts to "climb up some other way," of course, but from these man shall only learn at last that they are only bypaths. They do not lead west. This discovery is evangelical. It is an affirmation contrasted in all thought with the plausible assumption that all the paths lead west. Even our falls are necessarily falls upward, so some affirm, and direction becomes indifferent. Go as you please. Go which way you please. Some paths are longer, they say, but they all end at a common point. East is just as much west as west is. And those who teach this may confuse us if we do not remember the room there is under our canopy and take a fresh breath into our lungs and brain. For we are small finites, and in the universe of the great Infinite, up and down, and east and west, do seem quite relative and limited terms. Yet when the psalmist wanted to describe thoroughgoing contrasts in a great moral fact he used these very figures of speech: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us;" and, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways." In this man's thought east and west are not the same; up and down do not mean the same thing; and in this thought, which is the sane thought of man, all paths do not lead the same way.

Coming thus far in our journey we may take account and make inventory:

We declared our robust faith that there is something

the matter with us, and we confessed that we need to be saved. We convinced ourselves that of our own efforts we could not rise from the quagmire nor climb the mountain; yet we were forced by the reason of the case, by the experience of the career, by the testimony of many, and by the voice of hope to believe that we can be saved. Inspecting many ways presented to us, we could not find in any of them a path to the Highest. But our afterthought came upon the reflection that the Other has a way, and we gathered assurance that he has made it known in the voice of nature, in the message spoken in the resonant chamber of the soul, in the Book, and in the testimony of those who have found the way. And lastly we certified to ourselves that there can be but one way, and that by this, and not by any other, must we come to the top of the mountain.

We are progressing. Let us go on.

# CHAPTER VIII

## CHOOSE!

**In which it is Shown that, although the Way is Originally God's Way, yet in Order to Walk this Way a Man must Choose it Freely and Make it His Own Way, for God will Not Compel Us into it.**

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*"God alone knows how wide are the steps which the soul has to take before it can approach to a community with him, to the dwelling of the Perfect, or to the intercourse and friendship of higher natures."*—GOETHE.

THERE was something defective in our figure of the palace and the staging. If we inspect it more closely we see that the method of the Other gradually changes as the universe rises. It is very true that when God wants a crab or a starfish, as we have said, he makes it, and makes it in the best way. It is evident that down here in the lower order God has a way. And that is a hint for us that we have taken advantage of in arriving at the conclusion that he has a way when it comes to producing the highest. But we should go off on a wrong clue if we drew the inference that the making of a crab and the making of the highest are processes to be described in the same language, and we need not think that the process is as cheap and as simple in the latter as in the former. There are factors in the operation of producing the highest with which God does not have to reckon as yet, when he has only proceeded as

far as the making of crabs or starfish. They who say that thou art not essentially different from thy horse or thy dog, especially from the ape, thy brother, might easily fall into the error of thinking that thou hast cost no more. But thou hast cost far more, and the method of finishing a soul differs from the method of finishing an ape as much as thou art different from apes.

We do not think to say to an ape, "Save thy soul." As to that, we do not think it a fool's question when one asks whether an ape can have a soul. But with Thyself we ask no such fool's question, counting it just as well to say "self" as to say "soul." And in the experiment of getting the highest started and grown within Thyself, so that thou canst say that Thyself is the highest, or of the highest, thou knowest that the universe—not to say God—has proceeded as it never proceeded with an ape. It was only by a little that the universe—not to say God—admitted the ape into partnership. Precious little had the ape to do with the process. A little more perhaps than the pine tree, or the crustacean, but still not much—not enough to enable the universe to say to the ape, "This is Thyself." And to this day it is to be doubted whether the ape knows that he is, and that he differs from all others, apes and all—especially from God.

And God could not be understood if he spoke in the ear of the ape. The ape has no resonant chamber, no conscience. He cannot contain any Holy Ghost in any inner holy. And were we to say to him, "Come, now, and let us reason together," he would chatter, and cut

up a cunning monkey trick to convince you that he thinks you are talking of chestnuts. If to the ape we should say, "Thou art a sinner; save thyself," what answer can we anticipate but a chatter and a grin as the simian swings himself up by his tail to the bar of his cage or the limb of a tree? By which suggestions I only mean to point out the amazing difference in the universal processes. To get the lower—say, an ape, or a crustacean—God uses the fiat, and a few million years, and it is done. And if there seems to be some self-push in these lower orders of being it is within very small limits, and not to be called freedom. It is not indeed demonstrable that any other than Thyself contributes volitionally to the universal uplift. All mere things go as it is written of them. Or if they show signs, as they come up toward the level of Thyself, of aiding by self-push, it is not enough to make tragedy, or bring God's Son down from heaven.

It is only when God begins to fashion Thyself that the tragedy begins. For at this point—strange, tremendous paradox of God—where God will have the highest appears a Power that is not a thing, and it is new. It is a Power, and it comes in side by side with God and claims the right of self-push and self-direction. It begins for the first time to be able to say "I," "Myself," "Thyself," and also to say "God."

Precious little can the ape do to be a better ape, or be an ape well-behaved and comely. But this Power is different. We speak to him with confidence and we say, "Look up," and, "Smile." We begin to predicate

a resonant chamber, and a chance for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. To this new Power we appeal who can understand perfectly, or sufficiently, when we come down on the conscience—never before manifest in any order—and say, "Thou art a sinner; save thyself." For this is a man. Though he is a little finite, over against the great Infinite, still he contributes. He can be a "laborer together with God." Not as the ape or the pine tree is this little finite related to the great Infinite. That hint of self-push in them has become freedom in him. They are mere things created; he is more of the order of a creator, albeit he too seems to have been made. But he can resist and he can initiate movement, and he can blaspheme, and he can pray. Therefore when we speak of a way for this being we shall mean somewhat far different from the thing we meant when we said that God had a way also in making crabs, and starfish, and pine trees, and apes. Thyself is more than these. Of these somehow, since we see that they return to dust, we have learned that God made them out of the dust. But when he had made man—also out of the dust—he spoke of him a word additional. It is by the grace of the word additional that man became heir to the highest: into man was breathed the breath of God's nostrils, of God's life, and man became a Living Soul. Here is the climax—that is to say, the palace. Up to this point it was all staging. Now hath God begun to build the palace.

"Of his own life!" Man, then, is more than a crab, into whom God never breathed of his own life. Let

the wise man who reads the secret of the past have his own way when he begins to tell us just how it was done and what were the steps, long or short, of the process. We are out under the canopy, and there is room to leave the evolutionist to his own devices! It is enough for us to know that here, and now, we have come upon a being with God's breath in him, who can look God in the face and say, "I am." That could no being do until man came upon the scene. However he got here, this last creation seems also to be a creator and to have God's life in him. The difference is vast. Its chief value is in the power this highest being has to arbitrate a little for himself! There is in him, if only a little, this late-born faculty of the will. He has begun to have the sense of personal responsibility. He can pray. And from the hour of his birth he strikes a new note. There may have been some self-push in the ape, so that even he was capable of upsetting your inkstand. But this new being can make a new inkstand and the ink for it, if he will. He has reason. He varies his means, seeks original adjustments, forms hitherto unknown combinations of matter, searches stars, constructs dwellings, writes poems.

It follows that for such a being his way cannot be fixed by predetermination without consulting him. If there were a heaven for the ape or the pine tree it would be sure of it—and by one way, and that way inevitable. The fatalist and the materialist, making a man to be also a thing, fix human destiny also, and tell us that this last being is, in this, no whit different

from the crustacean. But the sane mind, feeling the fiber of its own sanity, soon discovers that a man, that is to say, the highest (or of the highest), goes by self-motion. Either he does or we are mocked with fatal illusions. He seems to. He asserts to himself that he can, and that he will. Now these words "can" and "will," which we speak of ourselves, are the language proofs to us that we feel our freedom. We have become contributors to the result. We sanely believe, and believe so firmly that the belief has become essential to our sanity, that we can act, and think, and will, uncaused by any prior cause, and furnishing absolutely the essential initiative.

Thyself, therefore, cannot be forced into God's way. When thou hast asked "How?" part of the answer is in the revelation of God's way, but the other part—without which no salvation—is in the free choice of Thyself. God has chosen thee for his way; but except thou, being also free, hast chosen the same way, then—no result. It avails not that God has a way, therefore. It avails not that God hath made his way known. The second prime factor being absent, thou canst not solve thy problem of "How?" The little finite must choose to walk with the great Infinite, Thyself must enter into partnership with the Other, choice must assent to decree. "Work out thine own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in thee both to will and to do of his good pleasure." This is another way of saying that the way of salvation is not a reason-and-knowledge way, first and chiefly, but an assent-

and-faith way. The little finite knows not, and cannot perfectly know, all that the great Infinite would do. He must be as a little child. Should it happen that a man has come upon divine intimation of the way, then must his pride fall and he must choose it. He must make it coincidently and utterly his own way. Think not that it belongs to God to adjust his way to thy way. There is a holy and blessed truth in the conception that God delights to do our will. What! is God utterly selfish that he takes more delight in his own will than in pleasing his copartners and dear children? No. God loves to please us all he can. But far more is he bent on bringing us up to the highest. Nothing shall ever be preferred above that. There shall be nothing that cannot swiftly be sacrificed to that. The pangs of Christ's cross must come for that, even though he pray in the garden that the cup might pass! And thus, while we can well believe that God is interested to join his will to ours; he is more interested to produce the highest in us, and to do that, mostly, he must join our will to his. Salvation, indeed, does not begin until we have learned that the road to the highest must be a walk with God. The will of the little finite may be set against the will of the great Infinite, and then there is trouble; the will of the little finite may be just oblique to the path of God, and then there is disharmony.

The first act of faith is the child's act. It begins to walk where the father walks. It chooses the father's way. To thy question, "How?" this is the point of

the answer: By submission; by choosing with God; by seeking and walking in God's way. This first great act of faith is conceived of as such a reversal of the ordinary will of the free creature that we have it signalized by a name. We say that it is conversion. But state the fact in terms of thine own: Except a man go by God's way he goes not up to the highest; and—being free, and a contributor to this result—he goes there always because he chooses that way rather than any other.

Consider, my friend, how much more comfortable a crab is. Never was he in danger of going in any other than God's way. True, he could not even know that there was any highest, but he is in no danger of missing his aim. At least, if he should, and should revert to some worse type—as some animals are said to do—still he will not worry. What cares he whether he be a crab or a pine tree? How comfortable! But thou? Thou hast a heaven to gain, and at what risk! Thou knowest that thou wert made to be the highest, or of the highest, and to miss that—what terror in the thought! And yet, while the comfortable crab goes, on a straight predetermined road, up to crab highness, thou must struggle and sweat blood drops in the garden. Thou must seek, and climb, and agonize. Thou must hunt in every midnight for the narrow entrance to a Way of Life. Thou must face risks and engage in conflicts. "The good that I would I do not." "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

And all this happens because thou hast power to walk with God. All this befalls because God would not make thee a sponge or an ape. Because he wanted company—longed for an ear to speak into, a resonant chamber to echo his voice, an Inner Holy where he might dwell—so hath he made thee. And when thou hadst come to thy kingdom, lo! here is a being who can stand up and choose death, choose a hundred lower ways, refuse to hear God's voice in the ear and in the chamber, deny God and choose downward! Why did he not permit thee to be a crab?

Thou wilt not ask this fool's question out here under the canopy. It is good to live. It is good to be free. It is good to walk with God. Even though I may resist and reject, take not from me this power to walk in God's way and make it my way; for so is given me my transcendent opportunity to reach the highest. And in the swift moment of the perfume, when one soft evening you crossed the Holy Way and felt the soft light fall on the lily sprays and the fragrant oleander, you knew, with a breath of revelation that never will fade quite away in any dark midnight, that at the end of this way, if only you find and follow it, is the unspeakable glory.

Hasten, mortal, after the unspeakable glory.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE CONSTRAINT OF LOVE ONLY

In which We Find that the Nature of the Case Itself, as it is Revealed in Reason, and Our Experience Also, Prove God's Way to be Best and Incite Us to Choose it.

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*"A small ship launched upon an unknown sea,*
*A small seed planted from an unknown tree,*
*Such is this strange new life to you and me.*
*Whither the vessel goeth,*
*And how the tree upgroweth,*
*God only knoweth.*
*But sail the ship and plant the seed;*
*What's done in faith is done indeed."*

—ANON. (adapted).

THAT Somewhat in man that makes him radically different from all lower creations makes it possible for him alone to walk with God. The other creatures may walk after God, but man alone can walk with him. Friend conversing with friend, here under the open canopy, they walk side by side, but the hound is expected merely to follow. For God will not have us servants and underlings. God will have friends. He might command and coerce thee to walk the same path with him, and then thou wouldst be of little more value to him than thy dog is to thee. It is therefore in the reason of the case if ever thou walk God's way it shall be because thou likest and choosest. If thou wilt

not be God's free friend, then it matters not how menial thou art. God will not have thee. If a man will not enter into his right, and be an equal and a companion, why should he think he has any right to walk with God? For God might otherwise have been content with the crabs and monkeys. In some ways they could be much better servants than thou canst.

But now hath he made and set loose here on the earth a being who can meet him on the equal terms and footing of companion and co-laborer. He will not command him and suppose it to be possible for him to be congenial by mere compulsion. Will any of us value such pretended friendship as that? No. And God will not. He will even suffer us to weigh the case, and never put a final restraint in our way if we choose something lower and forever abide there. So infinitely does he love us and so greatly does he value our companionship he will not constrain it. He will have no shadow of doubt on it as to whether or not it is voluntary. God is not a slave owner, to bind his creatures up lest they should prefer something else. If we will not, then he will not either. And that is just because of the very nature of God and of the very nature of love, and of man also. That to which any power could constrain us contrary to our preference would not be love, would not be of the highest. So are we bound to choose the way of God or never walk in it.

Nevertheless there is a necessity in this matter that is far more binding than the necessity of compulsion. Though we may refuse to walk in God's way, yet God

has means for showing us how foolish that would be. A being thus honored, and yet refusing, must indeed be insane. What! Refuse the company of God? For in this way walks God too. It is called his way merely because he walks there. If we only once could see this, and then if but once clearly we might see what Friend is he who walks there, could any man refuse? But when the perfume swept by we knew there was unspeakable glory. Once or twice did the sinner know; his mother prayed in the gloaming; in the childhood day was his heart pure, and to him, in some moments, this is the utter reason of the case. There are times when every man knows that God's way is the road to the highest. And he also knows that by choice, and not by any compulsion, must he walk therein. The displayed and ineffable loveliness of the One who keeps him company there, or who offers to walk with him, is his soul's invitation, but it is only invitation. It is never a summons. It never becomes force to lift him. He must walk with God because he prefers God. In this the experience of the sinner's life concurs. We have done a great many things because we must. In some sense "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will," but not in the higher ranges. There is a region where our ends are determined by our choices. This is metaphysics, and out here under the canopy we will not be vexed with metaphysics. Let us appeal to our experience. In all moral action have we not freely chosen? Have we not taken a better or a worse in every balance of life?

Sometimes it was a better and sometimes it was a worse, and if we chose a worse that must have been because a better was present. All sinning is choice of a lower in the presence of the higher.

And, making these instant and constant choices, we practiced with the Word Additional. This was the human addition that differentiates the palace from the staging. It was this that God added to the dust when, breathing into the dust-formed man, he made him a living soul, and there is nothing more certain to a sane man than that he walks in any path by his choice. At every guidepost it is himself that chooses the road. Every past transgression was first a choice. Otherwise it were no transgression. This is in part the matter with us. When a man repudiates the fool's logic and cries, "But there is something the matter," he will be apt to remember that his past choices are the matter, or a part of the matter. And when he remembers the transfiguration moments, when God drew nigh, he will recall that there lay near them some moral victory wrought out in the realm of his will. And remembering his efforts to escape the quagmire, and his enthusiasm when he attacked his vices, a man counts up his past hours in the terms and figures of moral effort, and counts all successes and all failures as results, at some point and in some degree, of his choices.

And this experience, properly looked into, should be enough to convince any sane soul that he is under a bond to choose God's way that is not in the least of the

nature of a compulsion from God. It is the edict of his reason and of his experience. God is lovely, and the way is swept with the ineffable perfume, and this argues the case. His reason reinforced by his experience teaches the same course. We are bound to choose God's way because we know it is best, and because all other ways are lower.

But there is an experience of life, usually coming after some maturity, that adds weight to this incontestable argument. Man, when he begins, begins high. Surely it would not mean much for the sponge to float along in the ordained way of a sponge. We count it no great loss even if, thrust out of this ordained way, the sponge should perish. It did not begin high. God had not carried life up very far when the first sponge appeared. But when the first man appeared life was well up the scale of possibility. God was nearly through with experimentation with the staging. And into this new creature he inserted faculties and powers that gave the psalmist his warrant when he said, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." Here was a being who might by only a step farther become "a king and a priest unto God forever." And to a creature set on such a height there was the opportunity for a fall that should be correspondingly great. Thou hast beneath thee, my friend, a hell that is very deep. It is as deep as the diameter of being; and, if thou shouldst fall, who can recover thee? Now, like an acrobat accustomed to balance over the abyss, so thou hast within thee all the time the sense of the steeps

below. There is fear of falling in the sane man's mind. Yea, there is fear of sliding down by even the slow degrees of daily wrong choice. That fear is not so sharp as God would have it, perhaps. But something of it is in every man. The sane soul, taking account of his life, asks sometimes whether it is going up or whether it is going down. And this subtle sense of what lies below us adds its warning to the reason of the case, and the experience of our failures in choosing, to teach us to choose God's way. And truly if thou couldst see what lies below thee and how deep is the abyss, thou wouldst be more concerned, perchance, with the question of choosing the way.

It would be enough if only one chose the small deviation, since this must be to miss the highest. When God asks a man to come up and take a walk with him it is sad enough if the indifferent soul loiter and frame an excuse. For it must be some excuse to walk in some lower way. And God will not come down. That is to say, he will not consent to indorse our lowness. Often he bends and speaks to us, pleading, warning, teaching, but he will not come down. We must go up. That is just only what he made us for—to go up, and to keep going up. And so, when we will not choose the high way, and walk with him, he leaves us there. Who knows what thoughts he thinks when, calling us, we will not come!

But Thyself, even out here under the canopy, may be dull and unresponsive. It is not at once easy for us, in our poorer moods, to see the beauty of the land-

scape. We live low. The eyes are dim, as yet, to spiritual things. We have not come up yet so very far above the ape and the crab. We feel as if we had not, great as the contrast was to us when we thought about it yesterday. But, after all, who can see the beauty of God? Has not your life been lived on a low plane? Thou hast been just eating and drinking. Thou hast traded horses. Thou hast played carelessly in the fields. Thou hast fixed thine eyes on riches. Thy soul is dulled with the sloth of indolence, with the coarseness of appetite, with the corrosion of matter. Thou art just a common mortal that has learned to sing a note or two, but nothing higher than strains of the last opera. Indeed, thou canst pray when thou art sick, but, being well again, thou hast forgotten that there is any God.

This sinner is not bad—not so very. He is just of the common stuff. It is easy to make him believe that he is like the other animals. How shall we interest him in the highest? Show him a horse and he will talk all day, but show him a psalm and he will yawn. It is this kind of man to whom the preacher must preach, and to whom the anxious evangelist must describe the way. And he has no interest in the way. Yet has this horse man, this dullard, this materialistic sloth, had his vision. There is doubtless a little child somewhere at home. And this horse man can even forget his horses, and this dullard's face can even light up until it is actually vivacious, when he hears the baby crow. And little breaths of the perfume that swept

from the illuminated way have reached even him. For even the brutish man is never altogether brutish. There is a song hidden somewhere in the resonant chamber that is not merely of the opera. It is this song that condemns him, as it is the song that might save him. But this is only to say that the first necessity of a sinner is to follow this light. It is not required, after all, that a man should see God in bright visions and know how altogether lovely God is. There is glimpse, there is fragment. When the baby crowed, suddenly this man knew what fatherhood means in this earth. So was God speaking. Let this man follow his light. He cannot go back to the horses again without some prick in the conscience. At least he has had a glimpse. That he might walk in a higher way he knows. And every man has had more chances than he will confess. How few men believe in their own excuses! And when we walk here under the open sky, where the brain is cleared of cobwebs by the breeze that blows fresh from the hills, we know that the blame for human indifference to God and things of the highest is not with the preacher, far less with the church, still less with God and our circumstances. For it was only required of a man that he should follow the light he has. At the least and lowest every man knows the difference between his light and his darkness. To thee, even though thou hast not begun very high, can God speak, and say, "Come up higher." And he, and I, and all of us, will lay the last blame on thee if thou wilt not. For we see the necessity more clearly, but we

know that the sinner has seen enough to make him responsible. If he be brutish, at least he has heard the baby crow, or he can remember the flash light of his mother's prayers.

It amounts to this: That the first step is to heed that which is nearest. That which is nearest is God. We may think it is only an echo, or just the baby crowing because he is well. But it is God. And the prime condition of finding the way is to listen and to follow. Man knows, even when the voice is faint as an echo, that this is different from the brutish bray of the lower. The brutish bray always has its own *timbre*. The faintest far-off sound of God is so far different that no man ever did or can mistake it. And he has sensitiveness enough, even in the face of an advantageous horse trade, to know that it is different from the voice of greed. The flash light of the prayer —though it be but instantaneous, shot to his eye in one clear moment, only a faint rich glow of the upper heaven—feels on his eye like no other light. This alone has pierced to his heart, and for that instant he knows that, if he would but follow on, by this light he can get home. And so is certified the first necessity of salvation to him. It is to listen, to look, to follow the nearest; for the Nearest is God.

So we walk on under the canopy. We had these thoughts, and they must be talked out. It is a way of approach to a theme that is greater. So far have we talked of mere preliminaries. Great fundamental truths have appeared, it is true, but our talk has not

yet brought us in sight of the center of the subject. Or at the most we have skirted afar off the central certitudes. Let us enter the nearer circle and walk in the greater light. These breezes of clear thought have blown out some cobwebs from the brain, perhaps, but only that we may think on yet higher things. Let us resume the holy journey.

# PART II

## SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERING LOVE

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# CHAPTER X

## "It Was Love Contrived the Plan"

In which the Love of God is Affirmed as the Ground and Prime Cause of Human Salvation.

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*"Sorry man repents of his love; the hottest affection cools in his bosom; love in the creature is like fire on the hearth, now blazing and blinking and—going out; but in God like fire in the element, that never fails. In the creature it is like water in a river, that rises and falls; but in God like water in the sea, that is always full."*—GURNALL.

It may help us to state the problem more clearly.

It all begins with Thyself considered as a sinner and considered as a soul lost, or about to be lost. As yet thou hast not chosen God, shall we say? As yet thou hast chosen and art choosing somewhat lower. And the problem concerns some way of inducing thee to choose God. This is the simplest statement of it. It does not thus far vex us with the theological vocabulary, and thus far it is an incomplete survey, it must be confessed.

It would be always incomplete if we did not mention the sinner's guilt. Thy sin is also guilt; to choose the lower may have seemed to thee thus far but a matter for which thou must only take the consequences in abiding by thy choices. But not to choose, in the last

analysis, is to refuse. Thou hast refused the way since thou hast not chosen it.

There is no especially mysterious theology about that. Either thou art loving thy Friend or thou hast neglected him and rejected him. So the problem is with the debt thou hast incurred by long neglecting and long rejecting of thy Friend. For this thou still owest. It is plain that there is an account unsettled between thee and him if thou hast treated him badly. Hath he not asked thee to walk with him and come up where he is—into the highest company, even the dignitaries and highnesses of the King's court? What shall be done to the free soul, companion by right of God, who disdains his King's company? At least we are sure that he has lost standing and fallen from his right. The gracious Friend, even then, does not disdain him. He has lost standing, but even then the Friend, still loving him, will restore him to standing, if he can drop his pride and come back. Evidently, if this be so, the restoration of a sinner, the salvation of a sinner, is a matter of the disposition of the Friend. It begins, the cause of it is to be looked for, in the disposition of God. I hope we are at an end of the teaching that once men heard, that the Friend is in the sulks. What! God holding off and waiting to be pacified?

But the way of salvation itself is a way provided by love. God is not sulking. He is not hesitant. He does not try experiments to see how far thou wilt advance. True, he cannot come down to the ground and level of thy low choices. That would undeify God.

But that is not because God is proud, or offended, or reticent. It is merely because God is holy. If the sinner would have standing down here, where he is, he has that already. That is the problem, and that is mostly the matter. Surely God cannot level his holiness to thy lowness. But he bends. He loves. The first thing for thee to believe is that God loves. The cause of salvation is love. If it were necessary, then we ought to repeat this over and over. He loves, loves, loves. Else he would not be God, and else we could not be saved. The original power that puts forth effort for us, and by which God pleads and warns, is love. Thence some have said that John iii, 16, is the golden text of the word: "God so loved the world." Yea, and Amen. Whatever, therefore, is possible to a holy being who is moved first and always by love we may reckon upon when we inquire the way of salvation, and in any clear analysis of the workings of love, and of the possibilities of a holy being who is moved by love, we must find every worthy plan of salvation. It matters not that we must discover what are the natural limits of love in a holy being. Whatever love can do for thee, while thou art down here in the level of thy low choices and low living, that can God do to save thee. And that we can predicate.

Let us reflect that love cannot be foolish. It is not blind; it is the clear-seeing faculty of every intelligent being; and because it is, love cannot assent to the crazy intents of beings who see not clearly, but through a glass, darkly. Love, seeing clearly, sees that thou

canst reach the highest only by coming up, never by God going down. He bends, but it is always from the high path where he would have thee walk. Therefore we may not say that, since God loves him, a man must be saved, anyhow. It is because God loves a man that he may be saved somehow. God has a "somehow," and it is somehow that he saves a man. Our human "anyhow" is the matter with us. It is, in one aspect, our human anyhow from which we must be saved. It is because we think anyhow will do that we do not get on. But love is wiser, seeing things clearly, and therefore love cannot come down to our anyhow. Anyhow almost certainly means nohow. But love means somehow, and therefore love is limited to the somehow. Love can save, but only by its own way. It can save by lifting us up, but it cannot save by leveling God down. Love can never level down. It can only bend. It can bend with infinite and ineffable tenderness, and with all the resources of God in the power of its hand, but it cannot be foolish. It cannot save us anyhow. Whoever trusts to reach the highest anyhow will only mock his own soul. For God has a way, and only one way, and love can only do what can be done in that one way.

To God's inexorable "somehow," therefore, let us not answer with a human "anyhow." The somehow is a somehow of eternal and infrangible holiness. Love is God's omnipotent right hand. But the right hand cannot work what the left hand must undo. If God be sane, then his right hand and his left hand will work

together. There is not, and there never was, any conflict between the love of God and the holiness of God, yet we have to see at least that love cannot do anything that holiness will not sanction. Love considered as a mere sentiment, not regulated by holiness, might concede things. It might go half down. It might think it well to be content if the creature got as high as a crab, or as high as an ape. At all events, when it comes to the question of saving thee, it might think it better not to be too strict. Love unlimited by holiness (if that could really be love which lacks holiness) might concede something to "anyhow." It might assent when thou hast started to climb up some other way. And since thou art so sincere about it, and art working so hard at it, why not concede something? But when Eternal Love set out on its course, before the morning stars sang together, it made an eternal pledge. It was a pledge about Thyself. It was the pledge never to rest until it had gained, for thee and souls like thee, the highest. What, then! Can love undo the final, eternal pledge of love and stop short on the way? If love could concede and come down, if love could suffer thee to halt on the lower level and rest in thy halfway anyhow, it would defeat the whole purpose and pledge of love from the foundations and beginnings of time. Therefore is love limited by holiness; by the faith of God and the pledge of God. It cannot come down.

God's inexorable somehow! If thou walkest the by-path of anyhow thou still canst see clearly enough to

be sure that God cannot come down. But God can bend, and God can send. Innumerable messengers visit the heart of the sinner who abides in the anyhow. The heavens above thee, the world about thee declare that God is love. What star shines but for this? What ocean wafts the salt air to thy nostrils but for this? Look on all thou seest, and when thou art sane the story of love is in it, the vision of the concern and care of God. Why shouldst thou have a resonant chamber but that God may say therein "I love thee"? Is it, then, because the world's Maker hates thee that he speaks in the resonant chamber? What if the speech be sad! What if it pang thee! This man, being sane, knows that the pang, even, is from the concern of God. To have thee get home, and because God loves thee, thence is the pang. There are, indeed, rebellious hours with a man when he denies this. But reason, passing in review the events of the life, could testify that at least love might have lain behind the pang. The brutish man may not altogether concede this, but the wisest men believe it. It were the mark of insanity in the maker of the conscience if its final office were to condemn the sinner. It might happen that the conscience, speaking in the resonant chamber, will become man's final voice of doom, but not from the working of God's love. If, dreadfully, it should so issue, that was not the prime reason of God in speaking in the resonant chamber. Conscience might speak with even the voice of Christ and say, "I came not to condemn the world, but to save the world." It is

plain that the monitor is a love voice. It would shut up the bypath entirely. When it cannot do that, because it will not compel a soul whom God made free and called a friend, then what is left but that love should set briars in the way? When it says, "Thou shalt not," knowing that thou still art able to disobey, it puts behind the "shalt not" a terrible if. And the if enforces and reinforces the shalt not. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Plainly, the voice in the resonant chamber crying "Thou shalt not!" is that we may live, and not die. It is a voice of love. Reason, that is to say Wisdom, utters her voice, and this too is the note of love. It has been made clear to us, out here on the open journey, that we were made for the highest. If there is a mere life push, extended from the life push of the brute and reaching up through uncounted past ages to become strong and vital in a man, then it must have been from the beginning the kindly and anxious push of love. And whatever shows us that we were meant for the highest, and must reach the highest or fail of our divinely appointed end, is a teaching and force of love.

We know that love could do no more, could plan no better, than to bring us up to the highest. There is nothing beyond the highest. So we can say confidently that God means the very best and uttermost for us. But if any earthly friend were doing that, by whatever means, we should believe that friend loves us. We should say that all his efforts are induced and caused by his love. Now there can be no doubt that man was

made to go up. There can be no doubt that to this vast end the universe on the whole is conspiring and concurring. If we know that, then we know beyond peradventure that the Author of the universe is working in love. If it were hate, then the universe on the whole would tear us down. On the whole we should have conspiracy of evil, and the end chaos. So when a thousand voices call us upward, and we know that never can a man rest, being sane, in the embrace of the quagmire, and that ever and forever he must be haunted by the mountain and the perfume, by these hauntings and harassings, by these lurings and warnings, by these "shalts" and "shalt nots," by conscience, by retributions, by inspirations, do we know, more certainly than we know anything else whatever, that the Maker of this universe loves the beings he has made.

If therefore, we inquire "How?" and ask what is God's way by which a man can be saved, we do well to think of love, and to say, the cause is love. From the time when the first fire atoms swirled in hot vaporous spaces, hurling themselves at last into spheres, suns, stars, planets, when in that vast beginning "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the great deep" the plan of love was laid, and the power of love was working. Before this dust man was formed who became a living soul, he dwelt as an image in the mind of the Maker and God loved him—loved him in the anticipation of a being who should in some far day be able to love him in return. It was no afterthought, this conclusion and

determination of God toward love. That lay first and deepest in God, and toward the consummations and conclusions of love all things thenceforth must forever run. Love was the final sovereignty that fixed the stars in their courses, that rolled the heavens out with the iron fiat of God's will and set them for the stars to dwell in, that bounded the firmament and the sea, that commanded the light to spring, that separated the east from the west, that lifted the mountains out of the swimming depths and planted a bow in the eastern cloud, that at last picked up the subtle atoms of the dust and flung them into the final art shape of a living man inspired by the very breath of his Creator. It was no afterthought. It was the plan. Thou hast been loved, my friend, from before the hour when the first fire mist moved in chaos. Thou hast been loved from the endless eternities of the ineffable and unfathomable being of thy God. Take off thy shoes, and veil thy face.

# CHAPTER XI

## God's Somehow versus Man's Anyhow

In which is Considered the Impossibility of Being Saved by Power, though Power may Do Much to Prepare the Way.

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*"God never forgets to touch the heart with the scepter of divine love, and if we were half as obedient to it as the flower is to the life-giving influences of the sun in spring we should be like the garden of the Lord."*—Beecher.

*"If God be omnipotent why does he not save everybody at once? God's omnipotence governs the solar system, but he does not govern the soul of man by the law of gravitation. Moral law . . . government . . . truth . . . is that by which he governs his intelligent children. If you do not distinguish, but confound the two, you land in mischief and confusion. Man, . . . an intelligent, responsible being, is not to be conducted to heaven as a locomotive is driven from London to Edinburgh, placed upon its groove and propelled mechanically. He is to be moved, if at all, by motives, by hopes, by fears, by reasoning, by fact, and if he resists all it is not for want of light, but something has gone wrong within him and must be put right."*—Cumming.

Sovereignty is a rather hard word. We may be glad that it is not a word of Scripture. Doubtless the thing meant by it is a reality, but doubtless it is not the highest reality. It is not perhaps a significant reality at all until it has been translated, and the translation somehow at last is spelled out in the characters of love. There is in fact nothing essentially noble in kingship. Kings may be of the noblest, but that could not be

because they are kings but merely because they are noble.

There is a song which begins, "The King of love my Shepherd is." Kingship, translated by the song, may be ineffably significant. Because the King can do so much, and has the power, even the power of life and death, it is of the utmost significance whether the King be noble or base. Noble, he can do the utmost that nobility prompts; base, he can do the utmost that lies in baseness. Thus, while in itself it matters not much that our God is Sovereign, when we consider the power of a Sovereign it matters everything what sort of Sovereign God is. For if his power were behind his hatred and his enmity, what harm might he do to thee! but if his power be behind and within his everlasting love then what meaning it would have when it set about the task of saving a sinner! To love, then, might be added also power. Yet, if one were to think of power, he would better think carefully and discriminatingly. There is a theology—a sort of theory, let us say—that God loves us; and, having all power and all love, we are told that salvation must be easy for God to work. How shall not God save, and save whomever he will, if to his love is added infinite power? So runs the theory. And, as the theory always proves more than sane men can believe, we inspect it, and we find that this conclusion is out of reason. It has come by some wrong conception of what power is and what power can do. But there are some things that power cannot do. Power cannot cause thee to love. Power cannot cause thee to

choose. But since to love, and to choose, and to love and to choose the highest, are the things first and essentially necessary to the salvation of a soul, then it follows that power of itself cannot save a soul. Unless God by his might can cause thee to love him, as by compulsion and force, he could not save thee by power. Power is limited to the things power can do. It can tie the refractory child with cords, and bring him into the father's presence. But to change the vile temper of the child, and put love in the place of passion and cause him to feel reconciled whereas before he felt rebellious, *that* power cannot do. Power, therefore, can provide the means to God's somehow, but it cannot save thee by anyhow. It cannot cause thee by force to drop reliance upon anyhow and fall back upon God's somehow. This did God provide, when, before eternity begun, he loved thee with the everlasting love. This was the great secret of Thyself. Into thee, as into no other, God by his plan of love put the element of the risk and the faculty of freedom. That is to say, he made thee capable to be his Friend. He made thee so that thou couldst not be forced to love him, even though he wrought on thee with infinite power infinitely multiplied. Into this dust-formed man, as into no other, he put his own breath of will and spirit, and by this he provided that thou shouldst never be coerced. Not even himself was excepted. He put it out of his own power to coerce thee, just as truly as it is beyond the power of any ordinary friend of thine.

This must God choose if he would have a friend, and

not merely stop with the crabs. The crabs he could coerce, and they cannot help themselves; neither can they love God. But that he might have us for his friends, who can love him, he put it out of even his own power to compel us to Love. That is another way of saying that there was to be one thing—belonging to the highest—that must be free forever and forever able to love and to hate, able to be God's friend because free to be his enemy. Great is this final secret of the soul! Wonderful is this high prerogative of freedom! Yet is the power of God exercised for thee. And power is added to love in providing the way. Though power cannot compel love in the creature it can surround men with reasons for loving. It can make a universe in which love shall flourish. It can create a world in which hate shall suffer, and be condemned. And this God has done.

There is an open way for love. Ages of human experience have shown that love works well. The universe, by and large, is on the side of love. The first motherhood, far down the scale of being, was prospered in the preservation of the offspring. Where there was no sign of motherhood, or if motherhood of some grade did not develop, then the type perished. It gave place to some higher type, where love was present. Scarcely ought we to call this love, far down in the scale of the lower universe of things. Yet if one might take the truth there is in that wonderful survey, "The Ascent of Man," in which this love instinct is traced far back, and down, into the beast, and fish, and bird life that antedate man,

it would at least be easier to believe that God by his power has made the love path successful on the whole. By the guard and device of motherhood, which is the beginning of love, the process of preserving and perfecting life has steadily gone on. And we may come nearer to the same truth if we study man's life. Did ever God make hatred work well? The stars in their courses fight against the man of blood and the schemes of the vengeful. That is merely to say that the Universe—we may well say God—is on the side of thy salvation. For thy salvation is to be by loving God and thy neighbor, Jesus being the witness to the whole duty of man: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." But suppose the universe—we may well say God—were against love; suppose it were at last pleasant and profitable to hate and to devour, and hard and sorrowful and unfortunate to love and be tender and kind. Making this absurd supposition we see more plainly, perchance, that God, making the universe, has by his conspiring power reinforced love and not hatred, and so has provided an easy way for thy salvation. For it is on the whole easy to love. At all events it is far easier, on the whole, for one who loves than for one who hates.

Though power cannot compel a human atom into the right way, since the atom is also a power, yet by power God can make the lower ways hard, uncomfortable, and impracticable. It can provide the sequences. There are those, indeed, who will tell us that by providing the sequences God has made salvation certain. But he has

only made it easier by making all other ways difficult. This power can always do. God cannot push thee up by power, but he can cut off the lower path. He can set the briars there. And thus by power he can show thee the Back Side of love. Even the Back Side of love is valuable. Pain, sequence, loss, penalty—these are, or are meant to be, only the Back Side of love.

For God is not left merely to his great invitation. The great invitation is a holy message, and it is always sounding in the resonant chamber. But there are power signals behind it. He makes the refusers to know that there is danger that "none of them shall taste of the supper." The invitation is the face of love, the warning is the Back Side. And all the unforgiven life of every sinner is experience with the Back Side. All our striving to climb up some other way is experiment with the Back Side. Conscience itself, which has experience with the moral power of God, is Back Side love. When God puts a pang after a man's sin—when he penalizes his selfishness with loss and pain—that is the power side, which is to say the Back Side, of love. It seems a solitary sting, and we do not always see the love, but doubtless it is love; but it is the power side; that is, the Back Side. If God did not love thee would he set the pang here? Nay, he would leave thee to die, as any lower thing dies. Or if he hated thee then there would be only the pang. But, since he loves thee, when thou wilt not heed the great invitation and meet the face of love he turns on thee, as the only possibility left to him, the Back Side. Even on these terms, and in this way,

if he can he will bring thee to know him by teaching thee what pangs there are to the man who will deal only with love by the Back Side.

Dost thou not see in this that thou art far greater than power? Thou art far greater than even the power of God, if that power stood merely alone. It is not that thy power is greater than God's power. That were very absurd to say. But that in thee which makes thee different from the beast, the dust, the pine tree, the ape, is different from power, and a far greater fact. Doubt not that thou art far beyond the reach of power, if power worked alone. Thou art greater even as God is greater, by as much as thou art in God's image. Sovereignty in God, meaning the power to compel things and direct them arbitrarily, is comparatively a low and mechanical and less worthy thing. The freedom of God is incalculably higher and greater. And though God gave us some little power, and we are able also in a small way to be sovereigns, he gave us something incalculably higher and nobler than power. He gave us a will, which is to say he made us able to choose and to love. That is a something far greater than power, though it were power enough to move all the planets from their places.

Choice, freedom, will—these are thy highest gift. And it is in this thou hast the very image of God. It is in this thou art able to be God's friend. And this is because, to a being who is free, who has a will, who can choose, mere power does not very much apply. Directly it does not apply at all. Hence it is that, when God

wishes to bring thee up higher, he finds it entirely useless to think of power as the means of doing it. He can use it as a sort of Back Side of love, but even so used it has no certain control of Thyself. It must still leave thee free. It can prick, and it can sting, and it can launch a thunderbolt, but if still thou wilt abide in "anyhow" power cannot force thee to choose God's "somehow." The ability to choose is always master over the power that could otherwise compel. Say not therefore that God could save thee if he wished. He could not save thee. To save thee he must not coerce thee, like the crab or the pine tree, else thy freedom were a mere deceit and a mockery, and thou wouldest in that moment be exposed as a creature essentially no higher than the crab. Thou wouldst stand unmasked as a mere thing. Thou wouldst never thence talk about the possibility of being God's friend.

Out here under the canopy we need not vex ourselves greatly to inquire how this teaching concords with the eternal wisdom of man's election to salvation. It should be enough for the theologians—and let them attend to it—that any election of God must always respect the freedom of the creature. The utmost Calvinist in this day concedes that much; but let them attend to that. If Thyself hath responsibility to choose God's way it is because thou canst choose, uncoerced by any decree and unforced by any predeterminate election. The way of salvation is at last the free way. Love and power begin the plan, from the foundation and beginnings of time, where God foreordains thee to salva-

tion by thy choice of the way. No man was ever foreordained to salvation except by his free choice of the way. While love and power, namely in God, are the cause, the decisive factor in salvation is Thyself.

God is older and wiser, and has greater power than thou. But he waited, and that for which he waited was the decisive factor. All the staging, and all the steps, and all the deaths, and all the struggle, from the beginning upward, was just to bring on the scene the decisive factor; namely, Thyself. Until he came decision was postponed. As to all other things decision was unnecessary, for their destiny mattered little. Considered in themselves they had no divine value. God did not care. Concerning them, if he took pains in deciding, it was not because they were important, but merely because they were in course of preparation for the appearance of the decisive factor. As to him, he was not to be decided on, he was to have that royal right himself. He was to arbitrate, or at least, he was to help arbitrate his own case. The ape could not, and the sponge could not. When this higher thing came on the scene, in that day when God breathed his life into the dust-formed man and he became a living soul, in that day was born a being who could choose life and death. He was, and is, the decisive factor. And thou, my friend, art he. Little power hast thou, but thou art arbitrator. Thou canst choose. Henceforth, not by power, not by might, but by this spirit of God in thee, thy holy freedom, is thy fate and the fate of the highest to be decided. God hath so willed.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE SUFFERING OF LOVE

In which is Expounded the Mystery of Suffering for Love, wherein God Suffers for Men, Because of the Nature of Love, and Because of the Nature of God.

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*"Why is an innocent person to suffer even one single pang of bodily pain for the sins of the guilty? I care not to say why, for to our limited capacities many of God's dealings are utterly inscrutable; but I cannot be blind to the fact that it is so in the world of nature. And if God deals thus in the world of nature why should we refuse to believe that his dealings in the world of grace will be characterized by the same great fact?"*

—GOULBURN.

WE have approached hither from the outpost. Though we have reached the foundations of the love and power of God scarcely can we say as yet that we have entered the charmed circle of the Christian truth. The charmed circle is love that suffers for thee. And this indeed is holy ground.

We are in the presence of a holy mystery when we think of the suffering God. And cold enough it is that we must begin with some definition. Hitherto we have been able to keep to the substratum simplicities. Perhaps we may still do so, if the breeze from the hills is fresh enough; yet we must try to understand the heart of this mystery of love suffering. It is of the very nature and texture of love to be willing to suffer.

That much we know when we remember motherhood. That much we can see when we look upon the patriot, the martyr, the friend who dies for his friend. Except for love none would do this. Love, and naught but love, goes willingly into the furnace. Or shall we say love joined to duty? But duty means, in a right world, only the accomplishing of love's tasks; so that the two things come to mean the same.

By the nature of love as we know it, and by our own certainty that we ourselves would suffer for love and for one whom we love, we know that if God is love then God is willing to suffer. If he loves us he is willing to suffer for us. If his love is joined to duty, which is to say, if his love is set on accomplishing love's tasks, then we know that he will be willing to suffer all that it costs to get the tasks done. This much follows from the very nature of love. Since God is love it follows from the very nature of God. If love and duty join in God, so that to get done the tasks of love God is willing to suffer for it, then we come by a straight road, that cannot be broken apart, to the certainty that God suffers to save man. For God's supreme task, as we have seen, is to save man. Out here under the open canopy, as we walked and talked, it became plainer and plainer to us that God has a way, and that he means for us men to walk in it as his friends, and so bring us up to the highest; but for his friends, whom he loves with an everlasting love, shall not God be willing to suffer?

And lest some one should use a very long word at

this point, which we cannot understand, and say that we are talking *patripassianism,* we ought to define. This long word only means that the Father suffers. But thus far we have not come upon the conception of any Father. We have thus far talked simply about God. That God is our Father we may well believe, with all the implications and modifications which this statement needs. But it is not intended to say here that the Father suffers. Very likely we will have to imply that, whatever dreadful word may be flung at us as we walk. But as yet we only are supposing that God suffers for love, or may suffer for love. And when we say "God" we do not mean merely and alone God the Father. Trinitarians, who teach that God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, sometimes talk about God as if he were three Gods. But we believe in one God, who is Father-Son-and-Holy-Ghost. And when we say God suffers we do not merely mean that the Father suffers, or that the Son suffers, or that the Holy Ghost suffers. For those who teach that a son can suffer while his father suffers not at all, teach a strange and incomprehensible thing. They seem not to know much about the heart and possibility of a father. Out here under the open sky we see clearly that love can suffer, and God, whether he be unity or trinity, if he is love and joins love to duty in doing love's tasks, surely is willing to suffer. There is nothing important to be affirmed, therefore, out here under the open canopy, as to whether the Father suffers, or whether it be the Son alone. Besides, we have not come thus

far yet. It is only because the listener by the wayside is sometimes curious and impertinent, and strikes in with the wrong word before we have need of it, that we go over this matter here. But let the curious listener by the wayside learn to wait.

True, it is the nature of love to suffer, or to be willing to suffer. But in all voluntary suffering there is hope. We are all willing, in our high moments, to suffer for love, even unto death if need be. Nothing is more common than for men to suffer for love and for the loved one. It is of the nature of love. But that would not be so common if it were not that we hope for something to come of it. If we were just suffering for no end—that would be out of nature. It would be absurd. The suffering would be mere gymnastics. Indeed there was something of this kind in extreme Puritanism and in all forms of purgatorial monasticism. The monks took exercises in suffering; not indeed at first merely for the exercise, and perhaps always with a view to holy results, yet there have been times and there have been kinds of Christians, not to say Parsees, devotees, anchorites, in whom and in which suffering was almost wholly gymnastic. It had, indeed, some rather selfish reference to one's own discipline, but there it stopped. The end did not at all justify the means. And the means were not noble. Merely to suffer for the discipline of suffering is rather low living. It may not be just when Lord Macaulay accuses the Puritans of hating bear bating "not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to

the spectators." But that witty characterization touches a foolish extreme of human practice. For suffering is not a thing to be taken because it is better than enjoyment. In itself it is worse, by the whole diameter of measurement. Otherwise we should hear that at God's right hand there are sufferings for evermore, instead of pleasures. But sufferings are not "for evermore." They are for working out the "peaceable fruits of righteousness." They are for the "glory that shall be revealed in us" and to us. For suffering must have hope in it, else it were largely wasted.

So if it should be that the great Infinite suffers for the little finite it must be because he hopes something will come of it. We have agreed that he wants more to come of it than can come to the ape, or the pine tree. As concerns us, we have agreed that God's last and highest wish, testified to by all his age-long creation, is to bring thee to pass, and, having brought thee to pass, to bring thee up to the highest. If this be so then it might easily be understood that, when God suffers, it must be in this greatest hope of God's soul. He suffers, if at all, in order that Thyself may be saved.

It is as easy to understand how God's suffering is involved in our salvation as it is to understand how all love's tasks may involve suffering in all life, and in all the world. When thy mother suffers, choosing to bear trial for thee and to be crucified for thee, agonizing over thee, it is not, as thou knowest, because she thinks suffering in itself is a good. But thy mother suffers because thou hast wronged her, because thou wilt not

listen; because she would bring thee to love her and to listen. On the one side she suffers because of thy fault and thy wrong treatment of her. On the other she does the noble and hard things that cost suffering in order to bring thee back. And even this last risk did God take when he made Thyself. There is no ape in all the African forests that can make God suffer. There is no fish that swims the sea, nor any bird that sweeps the air, out here where we walk under the canopy, that can bring a pang to God's heart and God's love. And had he never made thee, and beings like thee, he would have entered upon no risk of suffering. But on that far day when into this dust formed art shape, soon to be a man, God, to make it man, breathed of his own free life, and the art shape awoke from his sleep of nothingness and found that he could say, even feebly, and only as a cry, "I can," and, "I will," in that hour God took the risk. At last here is a being who can cause God to rejoice—and who can also cause him to suffer. God took that risk.

On the one side, we have said, the sins and ingratitudes and the indifference and refusals of his highest creature, man, God grieves over. Yea, over thee, thee, and thy sins, God weeps. You say, "Impossible!" You say, "He is the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity. It cannot be literally true that he weeps. It cannot be actually so that he is grieved, and especially over a worm of the dust like me." It is a stupendous thought. No wonder it strikes on the mind like a fabulous tale of theology! But it has been told. It

will be told until eternity reveals final judgment. For this is the center of every right theology, as it is the essential, and central, fact of the universe—this same stupendous truth that God loves us, and, loving us, suffers for our sins. Else we would say no more about them. It were not worth while talking about thy sins if they were merely a concern between me and thee. Certainly not. Then we might have the same feeling about them, and they might seem to be the same disagreeable thing, but in fact they would not be worth talking about. You and I would better discuss butterflies, and enjoy the sunshine. For though we might have the word, conceivably (though probably we should not), and might think of wrong doing (though probably we should think no more of it than does the ape), still, however we might talk, the sin would not be of account. In no good meanings of the word would it be sin.

For this is the whole significance of sin: that it grieves God. If God could not suffer for our sins we should not suffer either, very likely. If our sin were not a pang up there it would not be a pang down here. We might possibly be thought of as suffering as apes and crabs suffer, and our suffering would have very little more significance. We should not suffer for sin. There would be no suffering for sin if it did not begin with God. This is one side of the fact. Having made us, God took the risk of suffering. The staging could not cause him to suffer, because it could neither love nor hate him. But as for the palace, that is different.

And though suffering is in hope, if God saw no hope in suffering for us, being constituted as infinite love, God must suffer from our wrong doing.

That is the same, on a larger scale, and with greater sequences, as to say that thy mother suffers. She would not be a mother and hold a mother's love in her heart, if ingratitude could not make her weep. She would not weep if the family hound, or the family cat, were ungrateful. But if her favorite boy goes wrong shall she not weep? That is because she can love the boy as she could not love the hound or the cat. And, whether or not she has any hope of helping and saving the boy, his wrong doing and bad treatment of her cause suffering. This is so simple that we have only to go into the first house we come to, on our journey, to find out about it. In the first house there will be some mother who grieves or has grieved over the ingratitude and harsh treatment of some son or daughter. Or we have only to come into the first edge of society, where men have mutual relations, to find some friend who has been wounded by his friend, some lover who has been betrayed in his love, some patience that has been broken, some fidelity that has been betrayed, some affection that has been wounded. And here we shall find suffering if we find love. If the friend knew how to love he was forced to suffer.

Therefore, as we see, suffering comes to those who love, whether the suffering looks on to any result or not. Love suffers, involuntarily, and by the force of the case, merely because it is love. And much of

human suffering is of this kind, imposed upon us by the betrayals and wrongdoing of those whom we love. But then there is more than this in the suffering of God as there is more in much of human suffering. This mother not only must suffer but if her love is joined to hope she is willing to suffer, and this because she hopes that her suffering may help and save. She will do all the hard things she can, to the verge of the impossible, and easily to the gateway of death, if by doing and bearing she may save her boy or her girl.

It was almost shocking to think that we have power to make God suffer. It seemed incredible that God should have taken that risk. Yet we saw that it must be, and that it is inevitable if God is really a Being who can love. We saw, and we must see, that any being who can be loved has power to wound and sting and grieve a Being who loves. This is all the power indeed we have against God. We have no force-power against God sufficient to stay his almighty arm, but we have freedom-power to make God grieve, and this risk God took when he made us. But it is far easier to believe that God goes to voluntary suffering when his love is joined to hope or to intention (for we may say God does not hope; though perchance he does), looking on to the result. If God loves us, and is on the way to save us, he will go through suffering—in carrying out that purpose—even unto death. If it can be supposed that God by suffering can help us, can bring us on our way up to the highest, then we shall not doubt that God will undergo suffering. He will, even as thy mother

does. For thee, who hast been made to be God's friend, what shall God not endure?

I cannot conceal from thee, as we walk here together, that thus we are preparing to understand that great, eternal reality that men have theologically called the Atonement. For the heart of that truth, my friend, is God suffering for thee; suffering in hope, or in intention, that he may save thee. What holy mystery of suffering love is thus opened. Let us consider it.

# CHAPTER XIII

## Love and Law

In which We See that Sin is Not Only a Breaking of the Divine Law, by the Disordering of the Universe, Especially by the Disordering of Man, but Also a Wound Inflicted upon God Himself; and that Atonement Must Provide for the Healing of it.

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"*Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world.*"
—Hooker.

"*The Law is the forerunner that makes room for and prepares welcome in the soul for Christ.*"—Reynolds.

It is to be admitted that some of the refined scientific vocabulary in which the creeds, that is to say, the theological formularies, state divine truth is excellent. Let us not take any pride in avoiding it. Only let us be simple, let us think clearly, out here where the breeze is blowing from the hills. Yet surely it is possible to find room out here for all that is true in that great reality that the theologians call the Atonement. And thus far we have not come upon some of the great aspects of that reality. Not that we need to attempt any exhaustive analysis, but it would be difficult to see all sides, and the full meaning of suffering love, if we did not inspect also the other, lesser reality that men call God's law. Thus far we have said nothing about that. We did, indeed, open up some considerations about the

Back Side of love, and then we were very near to a glimpse of the thing we call law. For, in a sort, we may say that God's law is no more than the Back Side of God's love. And we may also suppose that when God's love is wounded, and put to suffering, it is partly because God's law has been broken, or resisted. It may be that too much has been put into Paul's definition. He said that sin is transgression of the law. That was forensic language. It was court language, the language of moral jurisprudence. It is not necessary to hold that it is the best and an altogether complete definition of sin.

But let us use it, and then let us inquire what relation suffering love in God may have to the holy law of God. And this will be a very fruitful inquiry if it comes out as we anticipate.

Law, on the whole, is merely a holy and right order. Things are in order when they follow right law. To break a law is to throw things, so far, out of order. Law, considered as right order, is infringed, therefore, whenever a man sins. For sin, like a grain of sand in the eye, is friction in the universe. It is a process of putting something out of place, or out of joint. When God prepared the universe, doubtless it was an expression of rational sanity. Doubtless it was a scheme of things that was in order. That is to say, it was according to rational law. But when God took the risk of making man, of making a being who is free, he took the risk of disorder. Some have supposed that that risk could be left unattended, and that a free being

could hopelessly disorder the universe; and therefore they have thought that God never really has made a free being and never has taken the risk of any disorder. But this reasoning leaves out of sight God's after providence of repair. God's after providence of repair was familiar to the psalmist. He tells us that God besets us behind, as well as before. That is, God goes after, and makes whole our breaches of moral order. If he could do this then we may easily justify him in taking the risk. He did not take the risk of running the universe into chaos, merely because he is to be here all the time himself. And if we disorder the world he is all the time on hand to set it right again.

So it may be easily believed that he did take the risk, and that man's sin is indeed a transgression of law; that is to say, a breach of the divine order. This aspect of things has been noted by all the wise men of all times who have thought deeply about man's sin. They have seen that sin is a disturbing element. It makes for confusion and trouble in the earth. It unsettles established good and introduces disagreeable sequences of evil. Especially does it appear that a man himself is disordered by his sin. He is shaken out of his normal conditions. There is without doubt a right and proper order for every man's life. I do not say a fixed and arranged order, for that we know less about, but there is a right and proper order; an harmonious, peaceful, and appropriate establishment and sum of conditions. When a man is in it he is fulfilling the purpose for which he was made. When he is out of it he is de-

feating that purpose so far and throwing his life into confusion. God made order even for the crab and the ape; how much more for man! It is not of much account that the lower life goes as it is appointed, but it is of every account that the highest life should go as it is invited. The right order for a free human life is to go as it is invited. Or, if we understand that a man is invited in many directions and must choose which way he will go, then the right order for a man's life is to go after the invitation of the highest. For, as we have seen, the chief desire of God concerning man is to bring him up to the highest, and that by man's own choice. The only road, therefore, to a right order for man is in choosing what God has chosen for him and going up. Every deviation from this is deviation from right order and, in the Pauline vocabulary, transgression of law.

In an army there would be confusion if the subordinate officers should begin to issue commands. Very soon the different small divisions of the army would be marching apart, and crossing each the march of the other, and presently, especially if the commander-in-chief were not at hand, the army would be only a mob. Think you there is less orderly process for a man? Nay, in this highest being the powers are marshaled together in symmetry and the soul is a perfect unity. It is, by purpose and creation; it would ever be, if man should listen only to the voices of the resonant chamber that speak to him of the highest. It is possible for him to listen to the other voices. The subordinates are also

giving commands. They say to a man, "Here, march this way!" And another says, "No, this way!" And if the Commander-in-chief did not come into a man's life and set the conflicting forces in order, besetting man behind, the faculties and powers would soon be an insane mob utterly to destroy the man and all his works.

But for this present and preventive Providence I conceive that mere prearranged law would not be sufficient to control the being into whom God put the breath of his own life. And this preventive providence and the providence of after repair go along with every system of law, else the law would soon perish. The assumption of certain loose philosophers that law is self-supporting had no reason behind it. The universe is taken care of not because God has made law—that is, has put it in order—but because God is here and keeps it in order. The danger, then, of man's sin in this universe is not that it might throw the universe into chaos, but that it might defeat God's order in man himself. For though God by power can prevent the world from chaos he cannot by power beget or maintain in man the order of the highest. The order of the highest is dependent on man's choice of the highest. The highest does not come down upon a man and take arbitrary command, as a commander-in-chief comes down on his army and restores the order of the broken forces. The highest lures, and pleads, and invites, but the highest never issues any arbitrary commands. The way to the highest is free.

Law, then, as such ceases, as a force, just where the highest, that is, the free life, begins. That is not to say that all law ceases, but only that all force ceases in the execution and accomplishment of law. Mechanical and predicable law ceases. The law for the highest, and in the domain of the highest, is an entirely different thing. It is from not seeing this that so many theologians and so many philosophers have stumbled, and made nonsense of the theory of human salvation. For up here, where God relates himself to the freedom of man, if there be anything properly called law it is law such as may work through love. The law of the highest is located in the heart of the fact that God eternally loves us. Whatever bond there is on us in the range of spirit, of freedom, of salvation, is laid on us by the lure and solicitation and beauty and holiness of the one who loves us. On our choice, that is to say on our love and freedom, God could put no force bond at all. That kind of law applies to the crab and the ape, but never to man considered as a candidate for the highest.

The question before us, then, really is, How shall God apply the bond of his love, of his transcendent glory, of his holy character, of his perfect spiritual order, to a man? The man is as yet unordered. More, he is viciously disordered, so far as he has sinned. How shall God induce him to put himself in order; how shall God bring him up to the ordered way? How shall he give him a right standing side by side with himself in the perfect order of heavenly life?

Now I conceive that any philosophy of an atonement

must answer these questions. The Atonement that God may provide must be supposed capable of restoring the order, that is the broken law, of a man's life (and the broken order of God's creation, if it be true that we have this power to unorder God's creation. We have that power if we can violate his love. We have that power if we can disobey).

It might be that we could have come down upon this question without the use of this word "law" at all. There would have been a grave omission, perhaps, from a discussion usually begun and ended by most theologians with a reference to law, and the curious listener by the wayside would have been liable to infer that the discussion is very defective if we had not taken up this word and considered it. Having touched upon it thus we shall be bound to refer to it further. We shall be bound to indicate to ourselves how it can be that God provides a remedy, for this breakage of the divine order, such that it begins to restore the order. We shall find it necessary to point out how the atonement that God provides deals with the disorder of man relative to the highest, toward which he is invited. And it ought to appear what is the relation between the love law, that rules alone in the range of the highest, and the transgression and salvation of the sinner who breaks the love law.

It is cold and unsatisfactory for us to meditate on law. There is no human sympathy possible for a law. Though it were broken over and over we do not think of a law suffering any pain from the break. Hence it

is that a theology that dwells too exclusively upon law and too little upon God, and the love and pain of God, has ever been too cold for the heart of man. It is very true that order is a great, and wonderful, and perfect conception, and it is great and wonderful that this universe is rational and orderly. And we who love to see things straight, and regular, and in proper sequence, have a regard to this. The housewife does not like to have the children throw things around. The books should be on the shelf, and the garments hung on the nails and hooks, and the hair should be combed and the shoes duly blacked. But would not that be a strange creature who should be a housewife first, and only be a mother afterward and incidentally? Are there some housewives who proceed as if the children were for the house, and not the house for the children? Are there some who think that it matters more that the house be in order than that the children be made happy? True, the order need not, in a good household, be sacrificed to the enjoyment, and on the whole children will be happier and better in an orderly house. But if the mother, being a careful housewife, does not look to herself she will be in danger, as many housewives have been, of thinking the order is for its own sake and not for the sake of the children. And then the whole purpose of the household would be degraded and subverted.

Now it has seemed to me, and as I think of it out here under the canopy it seems very certain, that some theologians have in the same way represented law. They exalt it until it seems to be sacred, and infrangible,

and not to be touched rudely, without considering that law is never for its own sake, and is never self-supporting. If this universe is in order it is not for the sake of the order but for the sake of the occupants. If it were conceivable that a case of disorder were, on the whole, better for the children then I conceive that God would permit it; yea, provide for it. That is not supposable, but surely it is not God's law that God is concerned about, considered in itself. Law is regarded because of its benefit to the occupants.

The occupant, that is to say the chief occupant, is he for whom law, that is, order, was instituted. All the lower life, as in the ape or the pine tree, is under law, and mere force law at that, merely because that was the rational way to build the staging and so to build the palace. But law, the rational expression of God's consistency, is laid on man, not for the law's sake but for man's sake. Yet so far has this been carried by some, that even God is represented as incompetent to infringe certain supposed lines of order in the world. The denial of the miraculous rests at last on this utterly false assumption that law is for its own sake. But the human heart does not respond to that idea. The human reason does not respond to it. We say the housewife is a mother first, and if she orders the house it is not for the house, nor for the order, but always for the occupants. And so we shall say that when the children throw the books and garments about, and do not make the least attempt to keep the order of the house, even disregarding the specific rules and commands of the mother, their

offense is not an offense because they have injured the order, that is the law, of the house, but because they grieve the mother. It is, indeed, conduct against the order, but the order feels no pain. The breaking of the order in itself has no significance. But it has significance for something other than itself. It has two pregnant meanings. It is, first, disobedience to the mother, and pains her. It is, secondly, the sign of disorder, and so at last of loss and trouble in the child. And man's sin, the disorder of the world, is not finally against law, though it immediately breaks the law. It is the sin of the occupant against the Owner. It is the sin against the Owner that costs and counts. We pain God—else there were no significance in our law breaking—and, secondly, we disorder our own life, and so make God's intent to conform us to the highest, difficult, or even impossible. This defeats his purpose, made as the dear purpose of his heart from the foundations and beginnings of time. Therefore when we say that sin is a transgression of the law we have not said it all; have we? It is transgression of the law, but that is not the final and significant fact about sin. The point, and purport, and final significant thing about sin is the fact that it much more transgresses God himself and that it unorders and disorders the only being about whom God is concerned.

It follows, then, that any atonement must concern itself with something more than broken law. It must somehow be a provision to take out the pain from the heart of God. It must be a provision intended to bring

back the order, in the range of the highest and in conformity with the freedom of the highest, in the life of the occupant.

It is for us to inquire further if such an atonement has ever been provided.

# CHAPTER XIV

## How Shall God Be Satisfied?

In which We Conclude that Christ, Dying on His Cross, did Supremely Display the Suffering Love of God unto the Extreme "Last Thing," Namely, unto Death.

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*"Almost all blessings are purchased at the expense of sorrow somewhere. Since the entrance of sin into the world it seems to be the condition of our every blessing, of life itself, that some one shall suffer to procure them. . . . The higher and purer the good, the more it suffers. . . . Let those, therefore, who turn sulky and grumble because they find the cross of Christ in the Bible have the goodness to remove the stumbling-block from Nature. . . . Is it not always the head of the house who feels most sorely the disorders, the evils, and the sorrows of his house? And who is the Head of this great house we call the universe? God, certainly. Then the chief pressure of its evil condition must lie upon him, must it not?"*—Pulsford.

A condition, not a theory, is what we face. And an atonement meets a condition. To meet the condition it ought to point two ways. It ought to regard what has been, and also what may be. If sin is a disordering of things then it ought to regard the disorder that has been wrought. If the free being is to be ordered again, and set under the love law, then atonement ought to provide also for that.

As to the disorder, and the sins that are past, the free being cannot deal with them. They are an offense

and a disaster now gone entirely out of his power. If atonement, or any part of atonement, can reach this condition it must be by reason of some action that man cannot control. At any rate, man cannot provide any remedy for the past. Only the Power that provided the original order can repair it. Neither can the little finite heal the hurt in the heart of the great Infinite. If the great Infinite has not some way of his own by which his pain and his displeasure can be atoned then the case is gone beyond remedy. It is plain that we cannot repair the injury we have done to the love of God. It is plain that God's sufferings that are past, whatever effect they have on our relations to him, are a wound we cannot heal.

We know that, when we wound the feeling of an earthly friend, whatever we do thereafter there is no good relation until the friend himself puts the old offense out of mind. He may do this either with or without any conditions. He may truly forgive, and wipe out all painful memory of thy offense. And so, when we have wounded the heart of the great Infinite, that wound can be healed when he shall choose, either with or without conditions, to put the offense out of mind and to forgive it. Now the very first idea of an Atonement has reference to this willingness of God to put out of mind and forgive the offenses, and sins, and rejections, and disobedience, of the free human creature. When the soul cries, "Remember not past years," God can answer, "I have forgotten them." God can say to thee, of these past sins and long-continued ingratitude,

and long indifference to love, "Thy sins and thine iniquities will I remember no more." He can say, "As far as the east is from the west, so far will I put thy transgressions from thee." But if thy friend has been wronged, hated, refused, slighted, are there not conditions? Has nothing at all then to be done on thy part, in order that the friend may put away the memory of the offense? Something must be done. Say that the friend does not wish to hold any pain and grief, any offense and hurt, still—will it go out while thou doest nothing? That were out of nature. Unless the offense has ceased and is not still going on, unless the good relation has somehow been restored, how can it be possible that the friend will be able not still to feel the hurt of thy wrong? Before that can be put away there must be some change in the relation. There must take place something we call reconciliation. The attitude of the offender toward the one offended must be somewhat reversed. Something must happen to change the hostility, and melt the rebellion, and bring out the friendly attitude.

It is not that God wishes to cherish a spite until thou hast done something to pacify and satisfy him. That representation of God has been made sometimes, and it is little less than monstrous. But is it not certain that past offenses cannot be forgiven to an offender who still continues the offense? When the Helvetian ambassadors came to Cæsar to treat with him after a defeat they reminded him of a former disaster to the Romans. Cæsar replied that he remembered that better

than they did. And he told them that, even if he could overlook that, he could not put out of mind so easily the present and recent injuries they were inflicting. Now God is not a layer-up of grudges. He is not a vengeful justice, to mark and count with strictness all our past offenses and exact a *quid pro quo.* He is in the attitude of forgiveness from the moment of the first sin of man that wounded him. And he labors, implores, outstretches his hands, extends his entreaty, that he may forgive the sinner of his sin. So far as the sin of the past is concerned, it need never be a trouble to any man who is not an unforgiven sinner in the moment of his last and latest sin. For while he cannot atone for the sins that are past, either to restore the order or repair the heart-wound of God, God himself is ready to take care of that. If only we would believe that he is!

In order that we might believe that God loves us even when we are against him, or indifferent to him, and walk wickedly or indifferently the lower ways, the time came in history when God undertook to demonstrate that willingness. Offenders against him, while he was ever pleading and laboring with us, we are to have the final proof that God has not cast us off. The suffering love is now to be displayed. It is to have its utterance in a tragedy so stupendous and significant that henceforth all the world and all the ages shall pause before that spectacle and say, "Behold how he loves!"

For, whatever else we may see in the cross of Christ, those who look to it as a manifestation of the atonement of God see there first the crucified love. The cost and

pain are the representative cost and pain that express the suffering love of God. When the Son came to suffer and die God so made the last proof that suffering unto death is not too hard a thing for love to do in proving itself to be merciful and kind to those who hate and disobey. The revealed way of salvation, so far as past sins are concerned, then, is made known through the cross of Christ. Jesus Christ, dying on the cross, has always been to the Christianity called evangelical that way of eternal salvation. He is so, in the first aspect in which we view him, because he is accounted the supreme manifestation of the love of God to the sinful. That he might show thee that he is no layer-up of grudges, but willing to do all for thee even though thou hast not received him and walked in his way, God in the person of his Son suffers unto death. This is the claim of the Christian.

If we came to that too soon it is not hard for us to retrace the way and consider this Being who died on his cross. The Being who died on the cross began Christianity. And he it is who made known the way to the Highest. This Being who died is the revelation of God's method of curing God's hurt by a greater hurt. The cross was God's great counter irritant. Until the cross God remained unsatisfied. If God were impatient, then we could almost say that, until the cross, God was unsatisfied with himself. For never until that day when they crucified the Son did God find any way to show to sinning man how much he was willing to do to reorder the world and forgive the sinner.

It must be true, in the counsels of divine wisdom, that this tragedy was timely; that is, it was soon enough and it was late enough. One writing of this great transaction declared that Christ was manifest "in the fullness of the time." That is to say, the time was ripe, and it was not over ripe. Yet when the time came, we must believe that God had waited for it and prepared for it, and longed for it, and intended it. For it was thus, as all Christian theology teaches, that God was to manifest the last and furthest reach and power of his forgiving and redeeming love. This Being who died may be studied to this effect. Those who look long at him end by seeing, and by saying, that in him was a divine patience, a holy blamelessness, a passion of suffering kindness, a supremely gentle spirit of forgiveness, that made him a completely perfect representative of the love and suffering and surpassing goodness of God. And very early after he went through the passion of the cross men who had walked with him, and believed in him, began to say that in him was God manifest. And out of the appreciation of the Godlike powers and traits of the Being who died, grew up very early the fashion of deifying the great Sufferer.

For us who walk and talk under the open sky there would be little profit in analyzing this affirmation of the Deity of the Being who died, and there will be some listeners by the wayside who will only be confused if we enter upon this metaphysical mystery that men call the Trinity. Let it be enough for us to accept the great historic truth that all good men, looking upon this

Being who died, have, one way or another, confessed. They have confessed that there was patience, kindness, holiness, courage in voluntary suffering for great ends, that make him the only supreme historical representative of all that we adore in God. For if we have any worthy God he is just such a God as Jesus Christ showed himself to be in all these high traits of suffering love.

And while this might not be enough for a theology it may prove to be enough for a profitable talk out here under the canopy about the way of salvation. Let it be held beyond this, by whoever desires more, that the exact Deity of Christ, differentiated from the love and patience and holiness imperfectly manifested in all good men, may be safely affirmed. There would not be perhaps any gain to us in our talk by considering this affirmation. We are willing to go on, when we have come upon a Being who died, and dying, as also when living, showed all the spiritual powers and traits that the best men worship in the great Infinite. And if the listener by the wayside should be willing to go farther than this he may find that he cannot, after all, go much farther. What greater thing can he say of the Being who died when he has already confessed that in him are seen all the high love powers of the great Infinite? A bare affirmation beyond that would not be so valuable as many theologians have thought.

The Being who died showed us, in the first aspect of him that we have come upon, how God by suffering love may satisfy himself. Some say "satisfy the broken

law." But we have seen that the law in this realm of the highest is only, after all, the order and peace, and harmony of God and his creature whom he made in his image. And we have seen that the terrible thing about this breach of law, or breaking of order, is the pain of God. And it is this pain that is cured by the Man who died. It is in this sense that Christ satisfies the "broken law." God could not be satisfied until he had done all. Hitherto, until the "fullness of the time," the day of the cross, God had done all—except. One thing only remained that he had not done. From the foundations of the world, certainly from the hour when man was made, God has been a sufferer on man's behalf. The atonement of God is no afterthought. It is eternal. It must be at least as long as the process of human sin and human salvation, if it be in the nature of love to suffer when it is wronged. God did not begin to suffer on the day of the cross. It was on that day that his suffering began to be cured. It was on that day that, at least anticipatively, and potentially, and representatively, his suffering was altogether healed. But if love must suffer when it is wronged then God was a sufferer from the moment the first free being, made for the highest, chose the lower, or the lowest, and so committed the first sin. But though God in all this time did much to satisfy his infinite love, suffered much to save and lift up his fallen creature, there was one thing God had not done. He had not died.

Love that suffers suffers in sympathy with some

other. God, laboring and suffering to save the little finite—namely, Thyself—suffered not only from the sting of thy ingratitude and disobedience, but far more in his sympathy with thy suffering. Every pang of the bypath, and every briar, gave out, and drove home, not one sting, but two. Thou thinkest, O man! that thou canst sin and take the consequences. What a fool thou art! If thou couldst, then the cross were a murder and the universe a lie. Thou canst take a fragment of the pang, but on the universe is the deeper mark. It is in thy mother's heart, and thy father's; it is in the village of thy residence, in the State where thou art a citizen, in the world that quivers a little when thy sin is launched. Czolgosz can die in the chair, but America bears the pang of his bullet as a scar in eighty million hearts. Bear the consequences? So little does this fool with his careless sin know what is the purport of this rash, foolish act that unorders the world!

And so even those who hate thee have to bear thy sin, and those who are indifferent to thee. So much is impressed on us in our day by that fact we call the "solidarity of man." Think you, then, that those who love the offender must not suffer too? And if there be any who must see him suffer for his sin, being too wise or too weak to prevent it, do they not also suffer with him? God suffers *for* thee, but very much that is because he suffers *with* thee. And now at last in history—which is only thy life written large—there comes the epoch when thy sin and thy sufferings are to be written large in the Sinless Suffering of God.

# CHAPTER XV

## THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST

**In which God Suffering the Last Thing—Namely, Death—is Seen to Suffer in Sympathy with Man—Who Also Can Die as No Beast Could Possibly Die—and in Order to Lift Man Up to the Highest.**

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*"What need you concern yourselves about the death of Christ if ye do not believe that he died to save sinners?"*—BEVERIDGE.

*"Hail, thou once despisèd Jesus,*
*Crowned in mockery a king!*
*Thou didst suffer to release us;*
*Thou didst free salvation bring."*—BAKEWELL.

LOVE that is willing to suffer cannot be satisfied unless it has sympathized. It must suffer because of the wrong it has received, but it must also suffer because of the suffering of any loved one. And for the loved one, and in sympathy with him, perfect love will suffer all that the loved one suffers. If man for his sin must taste of death then God will not hesitate "in the fullness of time" to go also to death. He will do it to prove his sympathy with the death-penalized sinner.

When we come upon this great and deep thought of God we have introduced a truth that we have not hitherto touched upon. It is that sin, all sin, if it go on and if nothing rescues, is unto death. When God made the final art shape of dust, and breathed into it the breath of his own life, the art shape had life of

a different kind—utterly, by the whole diameter of measurement—from any other creature of the universe. He had become a living soul; that is, a man. And it was by this breath of God, this Spirit of Life from God, that this highest art shape, called man, was to have his high existence. All lower beings could live a little time by the temporary vitality of the staging. Beyond this vitality that belongs to the staging there was nothing more by which they can live. When the staging-life stops the being itself stops. But when the art shape, itself only staging as yet, built up out of the same dust with the ape and the pine tree, had been vitalized it was with a new and different element. There was a wonderful and mysterious fact about it too: whereas the ape and the pine tree must live, and could not help living, by their very nature and environment, on their lower plane, and as long as God willed and the environment was favorable; this being who was made to belong to the highest was not to be thus maintained in his life and environment. He was to have something to do with retaining, and bringing to its power and function, the breath of God that was breathed into the art shape to make him a "living soul."

Considered merely as an art shape vitalized with the vitality that is merely of the staging, man dies as the beast dies; for as yet he is nowise different. But considered as a Living Soul there is possible for him another kind of death, and this because he has another grade and sort of life. He can live in a range where no beast ever lived and to which no beast ever climbed,

and so he could die a death that no beast can ever die. And yet the process is greatly analogous. When the staging forms die it is by losing out what we call their life, and when the highest, that is the man, dies, in this higher kind of death, he dies by losing out the breath of God breathed into him when he became a living soul. Now the sinner can do this. The testimony of Jesus, and of the wisest men of all time, has been that man may suffer this spiritual death. Would he live, and increase in the life of God, he must choose it, seek it, and be more and more conformed to it. But would he lose it, and at last utterly lose it, he may do that also by rejecting it, refusing it, and neglecting it. And when thus a man dies it is the death of the highest, and the cause of this death is sin.

It is a tremendous leap from this abstract truth, high and wonderful, to the hour and agony of that blood-stained cross on Calvary. Can God experience that kind of death? That mystery we shall never easily understand. But on that dreadful day when Christ entered into sympathy with Thyself, in thy death of sin (though altogether sinless was he), what meant that last despairing cry of the Sufferer? Was it travesty, a spectacle merely, a mere phantasy of the brain, or of the record? For he said:

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Was it not sympathy with the soul that dies? Was it not an experience in losing out the imparted breath of God? He, though sinless, suffered unto death. And that was to prove to thee that there is no limit to his

love. And it was to satisfy himself. If it was his law that was satisfied then it was surely the love law, that could only be satisfied when love had done the last thing. Love nad always suffered for sin, but not until that day of the cross did it suffer the last thing. The last thing, the final act in God's eternal drama of suffering, was death. When God has done this he has done all he can to save thee. The writer to the Hebrews understood this when he said that henceforth there is no more offering [of sacrifice] for sin.

Now here was the strange mystery of vicariousness. God is holy; and never chose a lower. He has bent, and he has sent, but he has never come down. There is no smell of smoke on his garments. His upper way, where the perfume is native breath of the paradise flowers that grow there, God has never deserted. In that golden way where righteousness is, and purity, and all that belongs to the highest, God walked since the morning stars first sang. Yea, it is he, walking there, that made them to sing, and that made us all to sing. And yet this strange paradox is sprung from the very heart and nature of God, that God who cannot sin suffers for sin. Yea, more tremendous yet is the paradox: God, who is sinless, suffers for the sin of others infinitely more than they can themselves suffer. And God who gives us the breath of his life, and who is life, and who ever makes for life and increases the universal life, and cares for all life, now in the last thing goes willingly to the suffering of death. Yea, goes though he is the only Being there is who does not

deserve death, and there suffers, perhaps, as no created being, deserving death, could suffer. And if love should really be what we think it is then love alone can explain that paradox. The greater the love the greater the suffering. And the more stable and undying the love the greater the voluntariness. And the more clear seeing and impartial the love for meaner and wickeder objects will it suffer. And so from such a love as that could not be excepted the meanest, the lowest, the most ungrateful. The thief on his cross, dying in the face and vision of that love, knew that it was for him. And when the men appointed to preach that love went out they began for the first time to proclaim a universal faith. It should be for the worst and lowest. Slaves embraced it and peasants went to the stake for it.

To every striver after results there is measurable satisfaction in having done all he can. If the aim fails still there will be serenity in the soul. And now God has done all he can. All he can is in the cross. Henceforth there sits a blameless One up yonder who has left all tongues without excuse. True, as men reckon profit and loss, by the account of justice, here is far more than any righteousness of ordinary law required. It was not due to us that God should sympathize with us unto death. But God had to think not only of what is due to us but of what is necessary to satisfy himself. The love law required more than the ordinary moral law. God required this of himself. Without the last thing God might have been clear before every human mind, but without the last thing God would not have

been satisfied. So this stupendous overplus of grace and love was worked out. The cross, that is to say the last thing, is done, and God has loved us as much as he can. His part is done, at least potentially and representatively done. Yet there remains the result to look after. Did it pay? Was it worth while for God to suffer unto death? For surely he need not suffer in order to make his own place secure in that upper way. If there are beings who never were in any danger of losing an original life of God, for them there can be no suffering. And if God suffered from the day of man's first sin, and in the end suffered the last thing, then it must have been for a purpose. God was not merely exercising. He was not merely engaged in getting a right feeling for himself. And so the atonement was not actually finished, that is, a right conception of it is not finished, when we have said that God, having done all he can, even to the last thing, is now satisfied. There remains the purpose and the result. For God was to do a work outside himself by this last thing that he suffered. It was wholly for others. True, love must satisfy itself by doing all, but it would be mere selfishness to do, even to die, solely for one's own satisfaction. The question therefore remains, what good can it work in the universe?

Nor do we for an instant think that God died for apes and pine trees. For these not only could he not suffer, but if he could the disproportion between the value of a single pang of God's heart and the value of an ape or a pine tree, or any other mere staging of

creation, would be so unthinkable that the suggestion itself is a mere monstrous vagary. But it is not a vagary, and it is not monstrous, to think that God suffers for a being whom he can love. And man is that being. We do not, of course, know that there is no other kind of being whom God loves, as we do not know all about all the beings of the great universe. But out here, under the open canopy, we wish to talk sense about the things within our reach, and to us, man, the dust-formed art shape into whom God breathed the breath of his own life, is the only being God loves. We know no other.

Then, if God loves at all and suffers at all, he loves us; he suffers for Thyself; and, as we have said, not merely because we make him suffer, by wounding his love, but willingly, in order to bring us up to the highest. This is the purpose, and when accomplished, and so far as accomplished, this is to be the result.

Has suffering, and suffering unto death, any such power? Can the cross operate to save a sinner? This is the crucial question. Upon it Christianity that is called orthodox, or evangelical, hangs, and has ever hung. But with this we are not concerned greatly while we walk under the canopy. There is room out here for all truth, and we need not inspect the label. The label may be misleading. For us it is evangelical and orthodox, without any use of the capitals, to think of Thyself. There is something the matter with thee, and our question is, Has the cross of Christ, and the last thing that God chose to suffer, aught to do with

that which is the matter? Has it relation to the quagmire under thy feet? Can it bring thee or lure thee to the mountain, and the perfume, and the upper way? Otherwise we have walked out here merely for exercise. Our long talk has been largely speculation. Otherwise, we would as well go back to the fool's question.

Well, we will not go back to the fool's question—not yet. We believe in God, and we believe that he is love, and we believe that love is willing to suffer for the beloved even unto death. And so we believe that love can do something by its suffering; else were the highest thing in the world, and the greatest thing in the world, a mere nothing, and we have fooled ourselves thinking it is something. At the least, love can put out of mind the sins that are past. It can do this, or be willing to do this, as soon as it has suffered all it can. After that, yea, before that, love may stand and say, "Thy sins and thy iniquities will I remember no more."

Under what circumstances, and on what conditions and by what process, can suffering love set our feet toward the mountain, having made forgiveness complete? And this will bring us to the question of our part. God having done all he can, to the last thing, which is suffering unto death, what have we to do? Way of Eternal Salvation, show us our part!

# CHAPTER XVI

## LOOK! LISTEN! BEHOLD!

In which the First Part of Our Part is Declared to be a Looking Steadfastly upon the Lamb that was Slain.

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*"Behold the amazing sight—*
*The Saviour lifted high;*
*Behold the Son of God's delight*
*Expire in agony.*

*"For whom, for whom, my heart,*
*Were all these sorrows borne?*
*Why did he feel that piercing smart*
*And meet that various scorn?*

*"For love of us he bled*
*And all in torture died;*
*'Twas love that bowed his fainting head,*
*And oped his gushing side.*

*"I see and I adore,*
*In sympathy and love;*
*I feel the strong attractive power*
*To lift my soul above."*—DODDRIDGE.

ECCE Agnus Dei!

The Baptist saw him, the Being who died, and called him "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." The Baptist, preaching at the Jordan, belonged with the great realists of the Christian ages, and of all ancient ages, who believe that there is something the matter with us, and with prophecy of the

cross he called this Being who died, a Lamb. Surely not from his meekness, merely. A lamb is among the most nearly characterless of animals. Each lamb looks and acts like every other. They follow in flocks after a leader and exhibit no sign of original initiative. It would have been absurd for John to use this figure if he had in mind so unmarked and ordinary a creature as a lamb gamboling in the pasture. But this was not his intent, we may be sure. The lamb with blood on his fleece was in his mind. The Lamb with blood on his fleece, and only he, could take away sin. "Without the shedding of blood," says the penman of the Book, "there is no remission" of sin. And the Baptist, whether he knew it or not—perhaps he knew nothing of what he was doing—was forecasting the great day when they should lead this Lamb to the slaughter, silent, and under the shuddering sky crucify him to death. If it has become the fashion with some to turn away from this unpleasant spectacle it must be because they have taken the fool's attitude and have said that there is nothing the matter with us.

But the Baptist, who thought that something is the matter with us, when he saw this Being who died as one the latchet of whose shoes he himself was not worthy to unloose, recognized on him the mark of the bloody fleece even beforehand, and testified that this was he who should take sin away. And pointing he said, "Behold the Lamb!" This is the first pointing out of our part. Behold! Look! Listen! Atonement must be translated now into at-one-ment. Our part is

at-one-ment. It begins by drawing nigh. It begins with the word of the Baptist—Behold! For that which happened on Calvary happened in vain if it were only a casual death of a Jew eighteen hundred years ago. Let it be that he was a good Jew, and loved his fellow-men. Except he were to be seen as the Lamb with the mark of blood on his fleece then were he not the supremely representative love that has suffered unto death. To "behold" a crucified Jew, however good and upright he may have been, would not be to see the Lamb of God. Let us be careful therefore with whose eyes we look. There are eyes to be loaned for the asking that never are able to see in this Being who died anything like a Lamb of God, but only a good and honorable Jew, of the time of Pontius Pilate, who offended the ruling class with certain new doctrines, and was put to death rather unjustly. But how could he take away the sin of the world? The Baptist must be a mere dreamer of dreams, or a maker of fine phrases.

Ecce Agnus Dei! Our part is to Behold! And if we have these fogs well blown out of the brain and the eyes, out here under the canopy, we may look with our own eyes upon this Being who died. Clear seeing of Jesus has been all that Christianity has asked of the unbeliever. It is all that is necessary at the outset for the unsaved sinner. Look!

There is not very much reason to doubt that the view of Jesus that a man may get from the record is a substantially just and true one. Higher criticism has not disturbed that fact. It would not disturb it if it should

succeed in eliminating everything that Renan eliminates. Renan leaves the suffering patience, the unalloyed purity, the forgiving sweetness, the courage in dying for a great end. He leaves all that we adore in the love, suffering, and patience of God. He does not deny that these were extremely manifest. He affirms that among the sons of men no other has shown these attributes of God as Jesus did. And criticism has not gone further since Renan's day; at least, not in this direction. If out here, under the open heavens, it should happen that we were left only to use Renan's eyes, and Renan's brain, we would in the end be obliged when we look at the Being who died to see the blood on the Lamb's fleece. We would still be in sight of a death that was different from every other death since time began. If we did not choose to stop in the Frenchman's narrow limits we have room, still using the same eyes—that is, the same elimination—to see here the dying love and suffering pangs of God. Ecce Agnus Dei!

But we may use our own eyes. We may listen to the echoes in the resonant chamber. The Record is still whole. And the overwhelming impression of it upon the age of Jesus, and upon the subsequent ages, lies behind the belief of to-day that here was a Lamb with blood on his fleece. Here was One who can take away the sin of the world. And, through the impression of the Record, heathen in Africa, and in China, and in the islands of the sea, falling on only the stray leaves of a New Testament find that it is laid against their hearts,

and reading it they see, without an instructor, a Lamb with blood on his fleece. They see, merely from the Record, the deep truth that they had meant by their fetich and knew not how to utter. They see the gathering of realities that they had heard echoed in the resonant chamber, and they bow before the Being who died and say, after the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God!" For this end, is the preacher. Jesus sent out the twelve to prepare them to teach the Baptist's deep truth. Say not that thou hast no guide to the upper way. Where hast thou lived? Why, even the heathen have heard. God cannot come down, but God bends and God sends. And no man can live, even behind his own darkened windows in the cell of his most unlightened selfishness, and escape the message of the Baptist.

That thou mightest look, and listen, and behold, God never hath left himself without a witness. There is something of an inner holy in the heart of every man, and there is always a holy message coming from God through the night. There were preachers of righteousness in the days before the ancient flood. Somehow they could speak—before the time—of the Being who died. The vision was not an open one, let us say, but at least it was a voice speaking through the night. It called the ancient sinner to the upper way. It bade him order his life aright. It spoke faintly at least of the love that was willing to die. It spoke always all that the ancient sinner could hear, and pointed him to light enough to get home by. So it was said of them

who had no clear vision of the Holy Law that they could be a law unto themselves. But thou hast not even their excuse. For that thou mightest look, and listen, and behold, the Being who died arranged for it. He did not leave the matter to the chance of human caprice. Twelve souls—one of whom himself forgot the message and fell by the wayside, walking down the lower paths to doom—twelve souls were taken out, educated, trained in the simplicities of the Lamb's vōcabulary, and commanded to preach. By the foolishness of preaching was the word uttered by the Baptist to be reiterated, reinforced; sounded in all lands, echoed in all caverns, and forests, and mountain woodlands, and city highways, until all the world should hear.

Where hast thou lived?

Go only to the corner yonder, where the white spire shines against the sunset, and see a place reared by the labors of some successor of these twelve messengers, and the labors of those who have looked and listened and beheld, in which this message should be preached. Not always faithfully and clearly, not always a message simply about this Lamb with blood on his fleece. More's the pity! More's the pity! The best of these messengers is still of the clay, only but little more, as yet, than an art shape of dust. But that shall not excuse thee. For there, with the least patience and desire, in every Sabbath of the long year thou shalt hear of the Being who died, and of the message that hath ever sounded through the night. It is always, and almost

solely, a sinner's own fault if he has not looked, and listened, and beheld. The Being who died, but who lives again, is in all the earth. The sadness of the earth is passing away before him. The whole world is lifted up in the arms of the Lamb who had blood on his fleece. Christ is everywhere. If to him any man to-day be a stranger it must be because he has shut and barred the door. For the message from the Being who died, and lives again, is a message of the ages. It is more than the *Zeitgeist.* It is the *Eh-zeitgeist.* Not merely a spirit of the times but a Spirit from eternity; and the message reads that God, who first brought light out of darkness, hath now "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

If a man shall say, "I cannot hear the word, I cannot see the light," then it must be, and it is, because he has shut and barred the door. He has not even been willing to stop his horse trade to hear the baby crow. He has forgotten the rhythm of "Now I lay me down to sleep." He no more pays the least attention to the voice that even Noah of old could hear. And the white spire has ceased even to be an offense to him, much less an inspiration. The preacher is to him no more than an ass braying, and the church is far less familiar than the dive, or perchance his stable. If such a man would hear he must listen. If he would see he must look. If he would witness that the Being who died and lives again is the Lamb with blood on his fleece he must behold. Ecce Agnus Dei!

The sense and knowledge of the Being who died and who lives again must come to the man who walks in the lower way. This message is to Thyself. It is to Thyself while thou art in the lower way that thou mightest be broken from thy pride and selfish living and seek the way that leads thee to the Highest. For this reason we came out on this open journey. Under this high canopy of stars, where the perfume can be scented as we walk, we have confessed that there is something the matter with us. The discontent of the unsatisfied is in our heart. The breath of the perfume sweeps past, making us to know, or at least to hope, that on the upper way to which it calls us the paradise flowers are growing. We have turned back from this high stage of the journey to look off through the dim history of the years where there walks to his cross the Lamb with blood on his fleece. Can we take our eyes from that? Is he not enlarged since first we began to look? Doth he not come slowly out from the ancient history as we gaze on him? See the wide trail from the blood on the fleece sweeping the meadows of the earth. And, wonder of wonders! behind the sweeping fleece with the blood on it the meadows are made glorious as when the dew of heaven visits them. And the blood trail cleanses wherever it touches. Even the sin in thy heart, pilgrim—even this—will it turn white as snow if but once thou shalt feel sweeping over it the fleece with the blood upon it. Is he not enlarged—this Being who died? He lives again, and walks up to us out of his ancient history. For, dying, he is not dead, and

death hath no more dominion over him. And he spreads out on the horizon. He reaches everywhere. Once he stood over the man at the pool of the five porches; over the cripple laid by the springside; but beside what million poor cripples does he not stand to-day? How many hospitals, how many schools, how many Bibles, how many civilizations, how many touches and flashes of heaven all over the earth, troop along before the vision, in company with the Being who lives again. Has he not enlarged? Ecce Agnus Dei!

But attend a little more closely. It is not quite enough to know that the Being who lives again has enlarged, and is filling all the New Earth. It is so, and it is wonderful. But that, after all, is not quite the question. With Thyself it is not quite the question. For if thou hast no eyes thou wilt not seem to see him, even though he is nearer and larger than all other forms that walk the earth. Dost thou see him? For this is the first part of our part: to look, listen, behold. Look into the Record, and with thine own eyes, and see how on the whole thou art pleased with this Wonderful One who walks through the pages. Eliminate if thou wilt all that Renan eliminates. What he leaves is still a Lamb with blood on his fleece. Suffering love is still there, in all the power and fullness of it. Look on the slain Lamb, and keep looking. Look into the message of the preacher. Hear the man of God. Something precious shall he speak in thine ear about the fleece and the Lamb who bears it, about the cross and the Being who died, about the stone that was rolled away and the

Being who lives again. Look into history, and see if he is enlarged, and more wonderfully glorified, as the ages have rolled away. See him in human life, follow him where the missionary labors, behold him in the world's movements, as slowly he lifts it up to higher thinking and better living.

And, most of all, turn in from these visions and be sure thou shalt hear him plainer than ever in the resonant chamber, where he is speaking to thee to break thy pride and bring thee to himself.

Behold the Lamb of God!

# CHAPTER XVII

## THE GREAT CHOICE

**In which is Discussed the Second Part of Our Part—Namely, Our Choice of the Being who Died and Lives Again; and that in the Face of All Other Beings and Objects that Solicit Us.**

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"*The very steering power you have, which is the highest power God has given you to wield, is nothing but a way of depending; that is, of right self-adjustment to the gales of the Spirit and the operating forces of God. How certainly and tenderly would God be drawn to you if he saw you carefully guiding yourself to his help.*"—BUSHNELL.

WHEN the life of God was breathed into the art shape and he became a living soul, straightway he learned to say "I am," and "I can," and "I will." And while herein was the possibility that he might resist the forces of this life from God herein also was the ability to choose. He may assent to the right working of the life of God in him, and then shall he walk with God. And when, through his dissent, which is to say his sin, he has begun the process of losing this life, and the question of saving him arises, it happens that this freedom of choice still remains with him; and by it he can share, and he must share in order to be saved, in the process of coming back to the condition of assent and repairing the sequences of his dissent. His dissent is sin. His assent is the condition of salvation.

Thyself, set over against this problem, can walk with God only by the freedom that became thine when God breathed into thee his own life and thou wert able to stand up and say "I am," and "I can," and "I will." For the critical part of our part is to say "I will." This is thy last high power that makes thee Godlike, and that at last may seal thee as a "king and a priest unto God forever." And in the theological vocabulary this is the essential feature of the experience that we call conversion. Thyself, turning from the lower way and consenting to walk in God's way, by choice may enter upon salvation. When the Lamb of God passed by the Baptist could only say, "Behold!" But the Lamb himself could say, "Come unto me!" And the free soul is able to answer, "O Lamb of God, I come, I come." And this choice, by which a sinner turns away from the lower and sets his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem and all the things of the highest is the decisive choice that opens and enters the Way of Salvation.

Experience has shown that abstract choosing of righteous life is difficult. It is a rather elusive and indefinite piece of advice when you say to a youth with the glow of springtime in his cheek and in his heart, "Seek love, young man!" How different it is when you have pointed out a heart's mate, and in the living person of the heart's mate have shown him the way to seek, not love merely, but a loved one. Or, to revert to a former illustration, it is cold and hard to understand when you tell the child to preserve the order of

the house, and that he must not break the household law. But when he comes in through the door, where his mother lies sick, and some one says to him, "Walk softly, for mother is sick," what a different thing is that! Mother is a concrete reason for walking softly "all the days of a man's life." "You can always run a man back to his mother," was a favorite saying of Hyatt Smith. The vile story and the ribald jest die unuttered when some one says that this jester would hardly like to have his mother hear it. And so will it be with thy choosing. Reason has pointed out to thee that there is a higher way, and thou long hast known that thou oughtest to choose goodness, and love all that God loves. But God did not leave thee to this abstract sense of oughtness in thy conscience. That which thou hast to choose is no elusive somewhat of the brain, no figment of the imagination. Rightness, and oughtness, and holiness, and even love itself, are mere abstractions. They exist not in themselves. These thou couldst never choose if their objects were concealed or unknown. And it is for this reason, let us believe, that God has not left us to abstractions. In the center of history, which is man's life written large, God placed the tragedy, the oppressed and persecuted One, the fleece with the blood upon it, the Being who died. And it is he whom thou must choose.

His kingdom is not divided. His heart is whole. His requirements are simple and few. But it will always be true, nevertheless, that God must be strict. The Lamb was not slain and the blood on the fleece

was not shed for triflers, unless they can be more. For he cannot trifle. And he cannot point two ways. He points one way. And it will ever be that the soul choosing him must choose him alone. Thou hast no part in him if thou hast not him altogether. He cannot be divided. He is like the seamless garment that the Roman soldiers stole while he died upon his cross. He is One, and he cannot point two ways. This means for thee decision, and it means surrender of every other. For the time, and the moment, at least, it means surrender of every other. He said it himself. "If a man forsake not father and mother" he is not worthy of me. This Lamb with the blood on his fleece is he who utters to thee the story of all that God can do. He has done even the last thing: he has died. The Being who died has done all. Now, and for this time of choice, he claims all. It was God's part to love thee all he could, even unto the dreadful last thing. It is our part to give him also all our love.

This choice therefore must be made in the face of all thy past engagements and enmeshments. It means the breaking of the snares. It means the off-casting of the fetters of the lower; for in the service of the lower has thy freedom failed and thou art a slave to the lower. Thy lower self, the mere staging and its powers, thou hast loved and cultivated. Its habits are on thee. Its atmospheres and malarias are in thy blood. Thou hast bowed down to self and forgotten Thyself. Now has come the time for our part, and our part is to choose the highest. That means to break off from a

sinful past. That means to rouse from mere indifference. That means to start off with a steady step after the perfume wafts that sweep across thee from the upper way. And if thou art thrown in a spasm by the perfume thou canst not trust to the spasm to save thee, nor even to prove thee saved. Know that many a man has had the spasm. How horrible looked his guilt to him when he got a good breath of the perfume! He thought a little one day, when the stable smell was distant and he heard the baby crow, and the more he thought the viler did the stable seem to him. And all the old stable life, like a stench of sickness, made him retch. O if only he might stay in the waft of the perfume! How low and dreadful is a stable!

That is a figure of speech, of course, because men have been saved while they currycombed a horse. But it is a figure for the reaction of a sinner from his sins that are past. It is Paul crying in the night, "Who shall deliver me from this death body?" And thus is begun the repentance that spurs us to choose. We need not talk much of this. It is different with different men. Not all feel deeply, and not all repent emotionally, and not all are nauseated to think of the old stable of their brutishness when they smell the perfume wafted from the upper way of love and hear the baby crow. But, whether or not we hate and loathe "the sins that made him mourn," we have now to face the question of leaving them forever with the dead past. Does that not mean a crucifixion of our pride? We loved our own will, and our own way, and we shrink and feel ashamed

to change the course. But no man ever went from a low way to a high way without changing the course. And it is done by choice; it is done because we will. And if we are aided by the nausea, and by a clear vision of the everlasting sinfulness of selfishness and the terrifying perils of the lower way where we have walked, and thence agonize in repentance, all the more earnestly may we break from the thrall. There are some things to be given up. There are ways in which a man can walk no longer. He has shifted center, and turned from self to higher self and to God. He has chosen. And, choosing to walk in the upper way with God, he cannot walk in the lower way with self.

His choice is of the One. The sinner may not choose two. The love and holiness and righteousness are personalized and incarnated. He chooses not love, but the Being who died, the one altogether lovely and chiefest among ten thousand. He chooses not something, but Somebody, and the Somebody is the Being who died and lives again. Choosing him he chooses whatever he loves, and soon must hate what he hates. There will be no peace with those who walk if we must require that God shall come down. God cannot come down. To walk with him we must go up. And we must be satisfied to love "the things that are above." For, choosing the upper way we must live upon what grows there and breathe the perfume as our native air. No man can walk there who has not forgotten the stable. Thou didst not look long enough—if perchance thou wouldst go back to the stable—thou didst not look long

enough to see the infinite beauty in the face of the Being who died. For with this may the soul be entranced. Hast thou yielded to the spell until thy soul chose him, and in him saw the very face of God? It was for this he displayed himself on the cross. That he might show thee the infinite beauty of suffering love, and attract thee to the upper way where suffering love walks, he was lifted up. When we choose him we have chosen the glory of God; we have chosen the One altogether lovely; Chiefest among ten thousand; King of kings and Lord of lords; the Highest, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

If thou didst look long enough be sure there will be no more fascination in the smell of the stable—in the selfishness of thy sin, in the lower way, in the life where there is something fatally the matter with thee; for, looking, if thou lookest long enough, he will seem so much better, and higher, and nobler, and purer, and sweeter, that the old life and its fascinations will be gone, never to return.

But Thyself, face to face with the Being who died and lives again, in choosing him must break thy proud heart of sin. "Except ye convert, and become as little children," is the uncompromising word that he speaks to human pride. The many ways that are not God's way must freely be abandoned in the face of thy associates and with the tearing of thy pride. The associates themselves must often, perhaps always, be changed. Thou hast thy friends, but thy Friend must be more to thee than thy friends. With thee there must be a "new

heaven and a new earth." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, and old things are passed away." Thou wilt even begin to change the note of life's sacrificial inquiry. Life's sacrificial inquiry beforehand was the question, "What must I give up, to have eternal life?" Life's sacrificial inquiry, after one has looked long on the fleece with the blood upon it, and felt the fascination of the perfume overcome him, and has chosen the Being who died and lives again, will be, "How much for thee, my Saviour, can I give up?" Even thou wilt search thy heart to know. Actually thou wilt long to be a martyr and a missionary. Yet, even if it be but the trembling question of how much one must, the answer will be clear: "All for Jesus; all for Jesus; all my being's ransomed power." Far more, counting all things but loss and filth, and refuse, wilt thou sweep away every lower instinct and spurn every lower way, rejoicing to sacrifice them for the Being who died and who lives again for thee. And thy mounting soul, set on the path of the upper way, journeying there shall sing,

> In the cross of Christ I glory
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time.

But let us not run before our theme. All that is after thou hast looked, and listened, and beheld, and made thy choice. If thou shalt make it at all, this choice of the One Way—even the Being who died and lives again—it must be against the "law in thy members" that wars against the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." God cannot come down, but by thy choice thou

canst be lifted up. Thou who canst not lift thyself up hast ability to choose and to lay hold upon him who can lift thee up. Choice of Christ is choice of the lifting-up power of God. The Being who died and lives again went not to his cross in vain. He told us beforehand that he has power with those who choose him. He could take on himself, and on his strength, the lifting-up task for man, if he should himself be lifted up. "And I," he said, "if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." And he was lifted up. There is blood on the fleece. The Lamb was slain. And choice of him is choice to lay hold on the great lifting-up power by which that God who cannot come down shall set thy feet on the upper way, where the perfume is and where thou canst sing.

And thou hast only to choose. Thou hast not to lift thyself. Vainly thou hast tried that. Vainly thou wilt ever try. Thou hast not to try, but to choose. Choose. The suffering love was to melt thy pride, to soften thy heart, to pierce thy conscience, to glorify love before thee, so that thou wouldst be fascinated and entranced with love when love took on its face of patience and went up to the hill to die. And now, when its work is done, this easy, hard, first, last thing is left on our part; it is, to choose.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### "Simply Trusting Every Day"

In which is Declared that Trust is the Next Part of Our Part; so that We are Upheld and Empowered by the Whole Power of God.

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*"Trust in God is the mother root and great vein whence the exercise of all graces has its beginning and strength."*—Sibbs.

*"Man's weakness, waiting upon God,*
*Its end can never miss."*—Faber.

It is perfectly true that we must go afoot. Neither the coach nor the automobile runs to the paradise gate. Neither of them could possibly be driven through the "strait gate" and the "narrow way." We must go afoot. Well, we must go afoot as regards all these specified coaches of which we hear so much talk. The Geneva coach, as to that, is no better than the Vatican coach. Pius is no better for this narrow way than John Calvin, and neither of them can drive a coach for us through the upper way. We must go afoot.

But we have bethought us, perhaps, of a qualification. We thought of it before, when we were talking about the coaches and the automobile. Perchance the time might come when the pilgrim trudging afoot shall feel his wings grow. Then, though he must still use auto-power, perchance he will be able to "mount up on wings as eagles." But, whether there be wings or only just the old "shank's mare," this pilgrim must go into and

through this narrow way, triumphing in his own accomplishment.

Yet will this be also a delusion. At least, it will have a profound modification. For though he must go afoot, or at the best must soar on his own eagle wings, yet, walking or soaring, he goes not alone. And where the way is steep he need not trust to his weak legs and new-sprouted pinions. For the next part of our part lies in a word that almost contradicts us when we begin to say that we must go afoot. Yet is it the great word of all. For man, seeking and choosing the upper way, when long enough he has looked, and listened, and beheld, the great word all along this way that sets the soul in security, where underneath are the Everlasting Arms, is the word Trust. This is the next part of our part.

Look! Choose!! Trust!!!

And the greatest of these is Trust. It is the word that marks the difference between the worry of a man striving vainly against the odds of his inveterate sin and the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." Yea, and if Pius comes down from his starch, and leaves his Latin to the ancient Romans, and comes out of his dim medieval porches and dust of dead liturgies and becomes a human soul, walking with thee to cheer thee on thy journey, though he have no Vatican coach to carry thee in, even he might be an object of thy confidence, and to him, a little, thou mightest trust thy soul, especially if thou art sure his own is saved. And likewise John of Geneva, getting down from his theology box and confessing that Servetus might better have

been loved than burned at the stake—having seen clearly by this time that his own was barbarous and that stakes are no evidence of soundness in those who set them up—even he, and greatly, so wise was he in the ways of the Kingdom, might assist thy journey. And even to him, by a little, thou mightest very wisely confide some very vexed questions that otherwise might trouble thee as thou goest on the way up. And with that childlike attitude that alone becomes a pilgrim on the upper way thou wilt heed all that good men say. Thou wilt trust the Book, as the chart of the journey, and at every white spire on the way thou wilt turn in to hear the voice of the holy successor of those who were appointed by the Being who died, and lives again, to tell the story of the fleece with the blood on it.

That will be the pilgrim's attitude toward all good human helps. He must go afoot very true, but he goes not alone. More and more populous grows the way with friendly helpers as he goes on, and though not one among them all has any coach to carry him their help is not to be despised nor rejected. Only let a man be sure that there is no coach for him—for even these saints on the upper way are not all clear yet in their minds about this coach business. They do not always keep in the breeze, and cobwebs gather in the brain, and they still mistake the coach for a heavenly chariot. And they have a goodly zeal, not according to knowledge, to urge us to board the coach, not knowing that all the coaches are just marking time. If they themselves are making progress they are probably in the

shafts, drawing the coaches, and singing at their pleasant labor. Now if they ask the pilgrim to help draw the coach, that is happy; but if they are trusting to it, and asking thee to get aboard and ride, then look out! But remember that thou canst always trust a little the man who is between the shafts. For he will have a good story to tell thee of triumphs of one who labors with God. He will have experiences and he will help thee. He will be the man, this saint between the shafts, even if he is breathing a little hard after that steep hill, who will tell thee, and all the pilgrims, that honor and joy are in going afoot and drawing the coach. And then when you ask him how he got strength to ascend that hard hill he will breathe out a little easier, and his face will lighten with a heavenly smile, and he will say, "Though I am going afoot, and seem to be exerting myself a little, actually it was not I who got the coach up the hill. I do not have to. There is strength that is not mine. I trust that."

Having looked, and chosen, trust! "He feeds the strength of every saint," though mortal pilgrims "tire and faint." Thou must indeed go afoot, but thou goest not alone. There shall come a day when thou shalt feel the brushing of a garment and know not Who touched thee. For though thou canst choose thou canst not climb up to the upper way alone. A man may think he has reached it because he struggled. But there was a quiet night after the agony of the repentance, and in an hour when thou didst but lie helpless in thy sleep gently thou wert set into the way thou didst choose.

And though thou must first choose, still thou hast not strength to walk. What! Thou, puny one, turn back the flood of years? floods of habit, tendency, wrong, and grief? Thou, born but yesterday, late born, with a will so fickle that it burns in thee but as a taper in the midnight of the universe, thou, starting off to find the upper way alone, against all the brute forces of nature, ingrained through degenerate centuries, and perhaps sweeping down from the carnage of tooth and claw, from the brutes who long preceded thee, to become in thee the savage instinct of selfishness that God can scarcely tame! It is puerile for a man to think—since especially he must go afoot, and can find no coach in the world that runs on the upper way—it is puerile, and childish, and insane, to imagine this pilgrim can walk there alone. And if God, who bends and bends, having taken thee up there, walk not with thee, to be "thy strength and thy portion forever," then wilt thou merely sink back into the gulf of the old life; then will the stable claim thee again; then will all the perfume fade, and then wilt thou die the last death.

Here, my friend, is the story of many a shipwreck. Perhaps it begins at the outset because the seeker did not look long enough on the Being who died and lives again. Perhaps the choice was not clear. But more likely it happens because of this delusion that we walk alone. It is the delusion that there isn't much the matter with us, and we haven't much to pull against. We underestimated the strength of the winds. The nature winds, and the habit winds, and the gales that

sweep from the world, we did not count the power of. And we thought we could walk alone. Sweet to many cowardly ones is the refuge of the coach. Let the Jehu on the driver's seat battle with the winds, since he has us safe inside. It is the pope's business to take care of the winds, or it is the business of the church, or it is the business of the preacher! Many who feel the winds, and do not trust to themselves, but to the coach, are in no better case. But there is no power sufficient for these winds until thou hast understood that thou art brushed in the way by the holy garment, and hast believed that in every furnace of the hot winds One is standing beside thee who is "like to the Son of man." Have we forgotten that this upper way is his way? Here is the path where he walks, and "he giveth strength to the faint, and to them that hath no might he increaseth strength." The first lesson of man's chosen new way is to abandon the delusion that we walk alone, and believe that he who walks here, the faint brushing of whose holy garment we felt as we went through the perfumed twilight, is able to keep that which thou hast committed to him.

We must go afoot, but we must not try to go alone. A little we may trust to the wise and good and much may we trust to the Chart—that is, the Book—to guide us as to our direction. But as to the strength we need, ah! that is alone in God. The Book is not God, though it is a chart of God's way, and the preacher is not God, though he may tell thee of the way. As to God, thou must have him by thyself. Thou must have him by no

indirection, not even by the medium of a Book, much less by the medium of a Latin potentate roting dead formularies in a foreign capital; nor yet merely by the medium of Geneva and the sixteenth century. All these may guide thee to the strength, but they are not the strength. Thy trust is not in any of these, not in all of them. Thy trust must ever be in the strength to which these, if they speak clearly, are calculated to guide thee. Trust God.

God is the soul's imparted strength. Paul could say, "Yet not I, but Christ who dwelleth in me." Since God could not force thee, as he might the ape and the pine tree, and since thou art not able to walk by thy solitary strength, there arises the cooperative value of trust. What God could not do alone, and what thou couldst not do alone, the weakest soul may do working with God. It is to trust, and feel the strength that is thine and yet that is not thine. It is to feel the imparted strength. A man is as a beast that has been stunned. Left to himself the poor thing never can recover. His brain shock is fatal. But it might happen that an electric current applied to the proper nerve terminals will shock him into life again. And though the creature of sin be benumbed past self recovery, if he feels the electricity of God's life applied in the right way he revives. "He feeds the strength of every saint." We walk not with God's feet, but we walk with God's electric fluid of the Spirit in our feet. Now, trust is just the soul's touch in closing the circuit. A man may just lean back against the circuit closer, seeing that he

is about to die, and the shock of life makes him strong to live. Trust—that is only confidence in the electricity sufficient to bring us to close the circuit. Make connection with God by closing the circuit, and then thou hast in thee all the irresistible forces of the great Power House up there where Power begins. The man who is connected with the great Power House, by that act of trust that leans against the circuit closer, climbs the hill no longer by his own strength. He goes up because within him is all the power from the great Power House of God's own life that can be carried to him on the human connection. That is not all the power there is, but it is all the power he can carry. It is enough for the hardest hill, and the pilgrim may even be between the shafts and it shall be enough to draw the coach along.

Trust closes the circuit. It is the act of waiting on the Lord. So it is said that they who do this shall "mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Until the circuit is closed the pilgrim walks alone. He may have looked, and he may seem to have chosen, but he has not trusted. The struggle of many a man in the dark, where the powers of the lower grasp and tear at him, has been in the baffling fact that he walked alone. He is cast down, and wonders why. He never happened to think of the circuit closer, and he never has listened for the holy garment that brushes him in the twilight, and he never has understood yet the voice that whispers, "I am with thee even unto the end of the world."

Let us see this truth clearly. If God loved thee enough to suffer unto death then it would be absurd to think that when he has set thy feet on the upper way, after thou hast looked and chosen, he abandons thee to thy late-born will and feeble striving. He bids thee strive, and thou must have thy godlike character by discipline between the shafts, but it is no lonely agony in the darkness of the garden. That is gone by. This struggle, by so much as it is reasonable, is the holy march. It is the heavenly journey already entered upon. It is the way of victory, and the thoroughfare of the perfume, and the journey of the jubilant song.

Nor is it for long, to the trustful one, a weary way, to put thee out of breath. There are restful shadows that fall there, and often thou wilt know by the soft brushing of the holy garments that rest draws nigh. He who walks with thee "giveth his beloved sleep." And with strength according to thy need, so long as thou shalt keep the circuit closed, the labor and the toil are no longer the hard task of the slave but the loving service of the friend who, for love's sake, feels not the burden at all.

# CHAPTER XIX

## FOLLOW!

In which the Next Part of Our Part is Unfolded—Namely, to Follow the Being who Died and Lives Again, Even to Death, if Need Be.

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*"I rest upon thy word;*
*Thy promise is for me;*
*My succor and salvation, Lord,*
*Shall surely come from thee:*
*But let me still abide,*
*Nor from my hope remove,*
*Till thou my patient spirit guide*
*Into thy perfect love."*—CHARLES WESLEY.

*"No one ever thinks that it is the . . . coupling that draws the train. A child knows that it is the engine that draws it. Nevertheless without that hook, or link, or coupling all the power of the engine were of no avail. Exactly so is it in the relation of the soul to Christ."*—GROSART.

THE man who would walk on the upper way must have his personal dealing with the Being who died and lives again. His innumerable representatives are in the world, but we cannot walk with him by proxy. His command, his loving command, is the same to-day as when he said to the first imitators, "Follow thou me." For the present, and for this talk (that is getting long), this will suffice as to our part. When the soul has looked, and chosen, and trusted, it is still left for him to follow.

True, we can hope something from the fascination of the ardent lover in the presence of the One who is loved. One would say, offhand, and not counting the strength of the diverting and distracting elements of life, that once a man has looked on the One altogether lovely he shall thereafter desire no other. And possibly this is always true of the soul that looked long enough. But experience has shown us that we ought not underestimate the lure and power of even the stable smell and the sirens of our past pleasures. There be many who do "run well for a season." Alas! how many who run no longer, who do not even creep, nor crawl! They seem gone back entirely to the beggarly elements of the world. And though this pilgrim may have the strength that is not his own, and feel the holy garments brushing him in the twilight, yet if he have no ardent thirst for the living water, and is listless in his attachment, how can he hope to keep his footing in the upper way? The personal dealing with the Being who died and lives again alone can keep him steady in the path. He must follow him and follow closely, and not "afar off."

This is necessary, not because he is thy guide so much as because he is inspiration and strength. Many signposts by the way guide thee, and many hands point upward, but only One can walk close beside thee. It is not the guidepost nor the pointing hand that assures thy journey, but the Presence that walks beside thee. We ought to say this, out here under the open heavens, and learn it in the secret and deepest chambers of the mind so that we may never be deceived. For many have

missed the best life, if they have not lost life altogether, by fixing the eyes on something, or some one who is not that Being who died and lives again.

There be good and holy Christians who sometimes hinder the pilgrim unwittingly and unconsciously. For they are so anxious to tell their own journey, and their way of getting into the upper way, and of walking in it, that they themselves come to think that their experience, or something pretty nearly like it, is a standard, and that those who do not get along just in the way they have journeyed are out of the path, or not quite up to the upper way. These good Christians mean well, but they are narrow. They indeed (let us think) have an experience. But if they have, and if it is a real and helpful one, then it came not after the norm and type of the experience of some other pilgrims, but just from their companying with this glorious Companion in the way. Now how should they think that thou hast nothing to talk about up here and nothing to do but just to say over the words they have said, and have the same experiences they had? But it is so common for the young pilgrim to think he has not even really found the upper way because he has been made to believe by somebody that he must have the same tone of voice the other pilgrim used who went on before him! And if he wishes to follow something it might easily happen, as in such cases it has often happened, he will find himself just imitating somebody's tone of voice. That is a figure of speech, of course, but it means only that some Christians lose the way by just fixing their eyes not on

the Lamb of God, but on some other pilgrim. And that is not to follow, it is merely to lose the way.

Not that there is no value in the story the other pilgrim is telling, especially if he has walked here longer than thou hast and can relate a real and sincere story of the journey. But thou must fix thine eyes on Another. And in thy following, if thou hast not some story to tell that no other pilgrim could tell, and different from any that any other has ever told, then thou hast surely not followed very closely. For this is not a regulation drill of the infantry. This is not a way where they train puppets to go through motions. With this soul that, having looked, and chosen, and trusted, now closely follows, "It doth not yet appear what" he "shall be." He is a new creature. Not only new unto himself but absolutely new in the universe. His senses, his intellect, his conscience, his affections, are electrified and quickened, if the circuit is really closed; so that his visions will be his own—and he will have them, too. Otherwise we might just as well ride in the coach. There is nothing God hates more than uniformity. Dissent is the sign of living things. To be unlike every other pilgrim, and be able to have and to tell by and by a story of thine own, this is the last and most certain proof that thou art following this great original Soul of the ages. If thou shalt ape, and imitate, and know nothing but the old vocabulary of even the holiest pilgrim, thou hast not followed him.

Not, of course, that it is a matter of vocabulary very much either. There is a common vocabulary, and

common thoughts too, that make up the freemasonry of Christian communion; but no two persons can be Christians in the same tone of voice. Thou wilt have something in thine that will show that there is in thy heart a secret that no one else knows. And out of the heart this pilgrim who is following the Lamb of God himself, not some other Christian, will have words and messages that were spoken to him alone, in the hour of the twilight, when he was brushed by the holy garments.

This Being who died and lives again, with whom the pilgrim would walk, has, however, certain definite methods in his gait and certain definite injunctions to his followers. They are not precisely the same to each, but are adapted to the special need of each. As thy need is not precisely the same as the need of any other so it will not mean exactly the same thing to walk with him in the upper way. But however varied the privilege and the requirements this following will always mean certain things in general. It will mean that service which best brings character. There are coaches to be drawn, not to draw thee, and thy place for the present is between the shafts. He will inform thee when the hills are all past. There are tasks. Thou must lead another by the hand. The electricity that came into thee when thou didst close the circuit is not for thee alone in thy selfish isolation. Pass it on! For this is to follow. "Feed my lambs."

Service in following is the condition of feeling the strength. And it is in the rest hour, after the hard hill is overpast, that he meets thee in the sweet silence of

the twilight, and then more plainly than ever thou canst feel the brushing of the holy garment and catch the perfume in its strength.

We cannot promise ourselves that the cross is all faded from history. Out here under the canopy we can clearly recall that Jesus does not "bear the cross alone and all the world go free." And following on we come in sight of that wonderful mystery that Paul calls the "fellowship of his sufferings." "We must suffer with him if we would reign with him," he says again. And suddenly we are drawn back and stand once more with the Baptist, and remember that he is to be a Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world. But shall Jesus bear the cross alone? We cannot promise ourselves that that which happened on Calvary is to be forgotten, now, out here on the upper way. For the atonement that is eternal—being in the very nature of love, that must suffer wherever sin is—was indeed finished so far as God's part is concerned. God has done all he can. But is it finished so far as we are concerned? Shall he be willing to love unto death, and shall not we? Who now follows him as far as that? Let us suspect that whoever does not has not really followed him at all, or at least has not followed him to victory. For this Atonement shall never become at-one-ment until it brings us into full fellowship with God. But is there full fellowship with God while there yet lacks the fellowship of suffering love? Why, this is the final glory of the nature of love, and of God, that it has proved itself willing to suffer unto death. That

is the meaning of the martyr history. Those holy men of the infant Church who went to the stake, and to the mouth of the lions, and to the tortures of Roman cruelty, were illustrations of these who followed him in the "fellowship of his sufferings." And this is the actual fact of all discipleship, it contains in it, if it be real, the willingness to die. No man has come to the power of discipleship who is afraid to die for love.

For thou hast thy cross, my friend, if thou art Christian. It must be so, because otherwise would this Being who died be left alone. And alone he would not satisfy God in the lifting up of the world. For it is by thy suffering, as well as by his, that the world is lifted, and Christ has made for no man an Atonement that is also an at-one-ment until that man has himself become an atonement also. He died for thee; for whom wilt thou die? He bore his cross for thee; for whom dost thou bear thine? For all suffering in his name, and for his sake, is cross suffering, is atonement suffering, whereby those who thus suffer enter into the "fellowship of his sufferings," that is, into his great Atonement. This mother suffers because of her child's sin, but she suffers to save him from it and from its consequences. If a man can be redeemed by any power on earth it is by the knowledge that his mother loves him, even when he is a sinner and crucifies her love day by day. And if there is any power in heaven that can save us it is the power displayed in the suffering for love of the Lamb that was slain. And thou shalt win the hopeless sinner to the upper way, by so much as he comes to know that for

Christ's sake thou art even willing to die for him. So, following on even to thy Saviour's cross, thou canst even enter into death with him. Paul said so. We might even be "dead with Christ."

This is the final part of our part. Having closed the circuit until the strength from the great Power House is felt in us we shall be able in that strength to follow—yea, though it be even unto death. In even those deep furnace fires of sacrifice where sometimes he would have us go there is the Strength with us. We may not think they felt the lion's fangs or the burning touch of the fire when the death of love had actually been dared. They dared it, but was it not the martyr road to the Presence they loved? If we do not lean on our own will, cut off from the Power House, and if we do not merely follow some human guide, even this experience in the furnace will be an experience with the beloved One, for he is there also. It matters not very much, my friend, what earthly hurt may happen to us if we know that he is there too. The smoke smell shall not drown the perfume and the flames shall not scorch the pilgrim. Perchance some remaining dross may be consumed, but so only the nearer will it leave thee to the vision. For it is by this steady following on into the furnace, that by and by the holy garments brushing us become visible, and the form of this Son of man is seen with the clarified and opened eyes. And we shall feel no fire, and smell no smoke, as we lift up our wondering voices and cry out in that Presence, "My Lord and my God!"

# PART III

## OF THE EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD

13

# CHAPTER XX

## THE WAY OF FREEDOM

In which We Find that Man for the First Time Comes to True Freedom when He Walks the Upper Way with God.

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*"Assist us, Lord, to act, to be,*
*What nature and thy laws decree;*
*Worthy that intellectual flame*
*Which from thy breathing Spirit came.*

*"Our moral freedom to maintain,*
*Bid passion serve, and reason reign,*
*Self-poised and independent still*
*Of this world's varying good or ill."*

—HENRY MOORE.

*"If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."*

—JESUS.

WE did not climb all the hills we saw. Our journey has not therefore exhausted us, especially as the wind was sweet and fresh and the sun was shining. On occasion we might have talked of many other things that still would have been close to our subject of "the way." But we shall take some of the well-known things for granted, lest the sun should go down and the night dew gather before we reach the end of our conversation. We know, with little need of explanation, that the pilgrim with his feet set in the way of God has experienced forgiveness of sin, and we have thought about God's

eternal willingness to forgive him at last made known in the final act of suffering unto death. Never will the great Friend pause on the upper way to remind us that once we were sinking in the quagmire and to reproach us that there is slime on our skirts. If we remember it still, that is only because we are filled with rejoicing that "former things are passed away." What God has forgiven to us we shall have power to forgive to ourselves. And we do not ask any questions about God's law, and the strange process by which he has been able to be "just, and the justifier of him who believes," for we never did have any such conception of law as to make that problem mysterious. When, so far as we can act, and so far as God has acted, the hurt of old sin is atoned for the hurt is also healed, and the broken order of love is healed, without any contradiction in the common processes of love. Forgiveness and law are not so related that the remission of sin and its penalties breaks God, or breaks his universe.

It might have been sadly interesting to inquire what would have become of the pilgrim if he had not looked, listened, beheld, chosen, trusted, and followed. There are many who have been curious to inquire how deep the quagmire really is, and to affirm just how much suffering and loss lies in the bottom. But we have never doubted that we ought to get out of it. If any sinner can be helped by a view of the bottom, by all means let him see it. Very probably the preacher is not saying enough about it in our day. But for us, here on our open journey, it has been sufficient to consider

that death lies at the bottom. Let the theologians describe it. We know also that a great deal more might have been said about the great Book. True, we have considered that the Book is the pilgrim's guide. And much might be profitably said back and forth, as we walk here, about the modern treatment of the Book by some who think they must not interpret it as it used to be understood. But we thought it enough to affirm that, beyond all that has been done or attempted by critics, the great Book is a guide reliable enough and true enough to get home by.

And so of other things about which we have not said very much. They need to be discussed on occasion, but we are not led to discuss them now. We have had a clear view, we may believe, of the need of man to be saved; of the futility of many ways that are not the way; of the suffering love whereby God satisfies himself and his broken law; of the Lamb that was slain, and of our part in gaining and walking in that upper way. And we are now well in sight of certain great results.

We ought to believe that there will be results. We have not come thus far merely for exercise, I am sure. We are not chasing butterflies. Out here under the canopy we have thought it important to be clear, and also to be practical, and so we expect there is something to come of it when God makes effort unto death and man does his part. Well, what comes of it? To say comprehensively would be to write books enough to fill all the world's libraries again, "for the world itself

would not contain" all that might be written of the Being who died and lives again, and of what he does for us.

The pilgrim, with his feet set on the upper way, is called a new creature. And that is said of him which seems to indicate that everything is new to him. The newest, the most wonderful thing about him is that on this upper way, for the first time, he is really and wholly free. God put the capacity and germ of freedom into the art shape when he made the "living soul," and it was indeed by virtue of this faculty, as we have seen, that Thyself differs radically and generically, from the crab, the pine tree, and the ape. But we also have seen that this late-born faculty of the will is in fact helpless to undo the ages. The ingrained, nature, momentum, habit, overbear this self-push until the sinner is driven to cry out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" So, having that which makes him greater and higher than all the mere staging-life of the universe, he finds that this faculty itself still is subject to the bondage of the ingrained. "What I would not that I do; to do what I would I am unable." And so, in this lower life of man, he is ever mocked by knowing what freedom is, and by the losing struggle to be free, while his real freedom remains but a dream of things that ought to be and might be. The ingrained is, or seemed to be, on the side of the quagmire, and the late-born will can only flounder therein.

But this new creature, up here on the upper way, has he still to continue this struggle? Yes, a struggle, but

not the same struggle. He is "more than conqueror." For he lives now in his free faculties, and not in the bondage to the ingrained. "The Lion of Judah shall break every chain." The process of the rising life of the universe is a prophecy of this, for the process is a gradual increase of the fact of freedom. The planets, the stars, the inorganic, or slightly agglomerated dust, are the most utterly in the grasp of the ingrained. There begins to come a glimpse of the thing that in man will be freedom, perhaps, in the affinities of crystals and the capacity of atoms in them to leap to each other's embrace. But when the first seed in the soil began to root, and grow, there was more freedom yet. And when the first low form of organic life appeared at the bottom of the sea self-push began with it, or was continued with it. And the ape, and all his ancestry, continued the self-push. They could do a little more to struggle against the ingrained than the vegetable life that preceded them. But not very much as yet. This was only a hint, in the making of the staging, of what God would be likely to do in the palace. And when the art shape received the breath of his own life, and became a living soul, the last step in involuntary life was completed and the first real step in voluntary self-push was introduced.

Now the thing to be noted is that freedom increased, and increased from the lowest up toward the highest. And that was the proof, so far, that freedom was one of the things God was engaged in bringing to pass. But when the art shape is made he finds that his freedom is

different. It is real and actual self-push. Not so far as his lower functions are concerned, for these are almost as automatic as those of the pine tree or a crab. Man as to his circulatory system, his blood, his physical breath, has very little to do with them, but the moment he came in sight of a quagmire, and began to proclaim to himself that there is something the matter with him, then, and in that relation, freedom has completed itself. The way out of the quagmire and up to the upper way is against the ingrained, and not by means of it. The highest way of an ape is performed almost wholly by the ingrained, but the highest way of a man must be a free way, and to reach it he enters into struggle with the ingrained; and until, in a sense, he has conquered the ingrained he knows not the real highest power of his freedom.

But if freedom is to complete itself anywhere it must be where life is highest. The absolute freedom is God's. God never was under law, save the self-imposed law of his suffering love. And by so much as we come into the life of God we shall actually have the freedom of God. The ingrained is now subordinated. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;" but the being who can reign, who can be a king and a priest, has become actually and really free—as free as God is. "Death hath no more dominion over him." That is as true of us as it is of the Being who died. "He delivered them who all their lifetime through fear of death were subject to bondage." And, with death, God in us has overcome all other tyrants that once ruled us—if, in-

deed, we are "found in him." He has overcome the ingrained. The "old man and his lusts" we have been able to put away. We feel the grip of the quagmire no more about our feet. "We can run and not be weary," we can "walk and not faint."

There is even more than this to it. It was only the perversion of our eyes, as to much of the ingrained, that led us to think it is altogether an enemy. The trouble mostly was that we were out of right relation to it. Shall the palace and the staging be at war? In the sinner's life they are always at war, but in the life of the upper way we see even wrath praising. The ingrained itself has become our friend so long as we keep to the love law; "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord;" and the ingrained when we see it, looking down from the upper way, turns out to be actually "a friend to grace, to lead us on to God." Even the dim memory of the quagmire has pointed the song of deliverance that we sing.

The highest is free, and whenever a man is actually free, with the freedom that Christ brings, he uses everything to help him on his way. Though he will not think he can ride in the coach, and attend to the Jehu that cries, "All aboard!" he will get help from all the Jehus on all the coaches, even the Latin-roting potentate of the medieval Vatican. Yea, there is a new heaven and a new earth for him, and already he feels the wings begin to grow. He thought this was a narrow way, but after his freedom fully comes, lo! he knows with joy that it is the only really broad and glorious way for

man. Here alone he sloughs off his narrowness, his little bondage to petty habit and custom, his concern for what "they say," and having fixed his eyes on the Presence, and his soul also, he finds that he is part owner with him of life and death, of principalities and powers, of things present and things to come. "For all are yours."

All thy being's ransomed powers are awake, and the central power is thy godlike freedom. The range of life has widened. Suspect a narrow Christian. There are such; but they are not yet emancipated, and they walk only with downcast eyes on the upper way, wondering when their bondage shall really be at an end. Being "freed from the law of sin and death" they cannot rise up and grasp their freedom. It is often these Christians, this half-saved kind, who try to shape other pilgrims in their particular mold. But the Christian who has come up fully into the realm of the highest will have with his freedom a great deal of originality. He will add something to the value of the way. He will leave some glorious marks to guide other pilgrims who come after. He will search out the new treasures of the word, and throw new light on the old, by the revelation of his own experience with God. The free Christian never does run entirely in ruts. He does not, because he is free.

The whole freedom of the Christian in the upper way is discriminating. While on occasion he can use all things, without abusing them, in fact he does not. He has liberty to eschew as well as to use. He can go

about among the precious vessels of the sanctuary without stumbling and breaking them. He can have his habits of life that offend no weak brother on the way. Freedom in Christ! This is one of the results. When it comes there is no more plodding. Even between the shafts we shall sing, knowing that he is there with us. Though we walk at last in what men call the valley of the shadow of death, being free, we shall know that we are greater than death. Its sting shall be harmless to a soul that is free.

# CHAPTER XXI

## Joy and Life

In which the Christian Joy and Great Increase of God's Life in Man are Viewed as Further Results of the Choice of Christ's Way of Salvation.

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*"A heart rejoicing in him delights in all his will, and is surely providing for the most firm joy in all estates. For if nothing can come to pass besides or against his will, then cannot that soul be vexed that delights in him and has no will but his, and follows him at all times, not only when he shines bright on them, but when they are clouded."*—Leighton.

*"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."*—Paul.

The music lesson of the pilgrim is not irksome. It may be as yet with a "lisping, stammering tongue" that he hymns out the angel's song, but he has the breath of the perfume in his nostrils and great is the perfume as a throat tonic. The throat is clearing fast of the harsh dissonance of the earth. The song has no longer any tone of the beast that growled. It is becoming natural, and it is swelling fuller all the way.

Freedom in the way is courage and cheer, and though at first the pilgrim tried his snatch of song timidly, and in a low voice, his freedom is growing and the song grows with it. He is learning what is meant by the "fullness of joy" and the "pleasures for evermore." The testimony of a million million singing saints comes

down to us, in the waftings of the song, to prove to us that joy is a growing result of the walk in the upper way.

Songless sin is done. Once the sinner caught a faint echo of this great song of the redeemed; and sometimes the sinner tried, in some moment of the perfume, to sing it, but the growl of the beast was louder than the song. The harsh fogs of the quagmire were in the throat and he could not sing the old new song. But up here he can sing it. Up here it wells up, and if he will but just open his mouth it sings itself. A songless Christian is an impossibility. True, there are some who only sing in the soul, because these human vocal organs and this sense of tune in the lower life are defective. But it shall matter less that no one can hear his voice. He will be singing the heart song and the Friend at his side can hear. Is it our privilege to be happy? Why not, if we walk the upper way? There are pleasures that we hear about in the lower way, and those who are in the lower way often live for the pleasure. But not the Christian. The pilgrim pursuing the highest does not walk here for the pleasure it gives him, as a final reason and end of the walk. And this fact marks the difference between the pleasures of the sinner and the pleasures of the pilgrim. The lower life may think of nothing else. And if perchance a man living in sin believes that he soon will die, and has found no access to the highest, this will be the best that seems to remain to him: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

From the high place of salvation we look back upon

that condition and how hollow are the joys it recalls. If these same avocations are now brought up into the place of the song how different they seem. Doing sometimes the very same things, as we define things in our loose human way, the Christian does them as the holy pleasures that God also enjoys. At all events, he bids us enjoy. And, after all, that is not quite the point of the case. It is rather that a Christian, by so much as he is a Christian, cannot help happiness. He is happy in being a Christian and in all the lawful activities in which he engages. He has transformed every movement of his life into the terms of satisfied enjoyment. If he comes to suffering, still he shrinks not—for "the joy that is set before him." Into this joy, when it has become well fixed, no trouble of this world can break. He is cheerful in persecution and sings his song in the night. Is this fancy? Why, my friend, the world is full of Christians who largely realize this condition. They make the earth holy and glad with their lives. They sing their song besieged in the compounds of Pekin with the heathen hurling balls of death against the garrison. They go to the jaws of death and the gates of hell undisturbed. He is blind and deaf who does not heed this tremendous testimony of Christian joy. It rings in the hundreds of thousands of human tabernacles every Sabbath day. It sounds in the sick chamber of the hospital, it cheers the dying on the battle field, it walks with ten thousand missionaries through the desolate wastes of lands black with the hopeless midnight of heathenism, and up to the vaulted

skies every moment of modern days it rises to voice the jubilant triumph and unutterable joy of the followers of the Being who died and lives again.

Men feel like singing when the health is good. Even the sinner can sing some kind of a song when the blood is red in the cheek and the flow of it is swift in the veins. Now, that is to say that joy depends on the quantity of the life that is in us. It is life, and increase of life, that lies behind the song and joy of the Christian. When Jesus at one time defined his mission on the earth he said: "I came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He described himself as a vine and said that we are the branches, receiving the life of the vine, from which if we were cut off we should be "cast out as a branch and be withered."

Now at bottom this was the lack and the trouble with the sinner walking the lower way. He lacked life. The breath of God's own life was in him; true, but how much of it he had lost. How poorly did he take care of it! His sin was all the time opening the circuit. Every accident of sin was choking the vitality of the branch, and it did not, except in a very feeble fashion, "abide in the Vine." So life was ebbing low, and in some seemed little higher and better than the life of the beast himself. But this life by which the highest lived was a different thing utterly from the life by which the beast lives. On his plane a beast may have an enormous flow of life. Some of the beasts are so vital that they live longer than a man, and some of

them have a nervous system and a circulatory system even more vital than man's. And, so far as that is concerned, by so much as a beast is said to live he cannot lose his life out by any act or choice of his own. He cannot increase it nor decrease it. But man could. He could have life "more abundantly" or he could just drag along "at a poor dying rate." Even after he has set his feet in the upper way there will be a difference in the degree to which life is felt.

But we recognize the significance of the matter when we say that a Christian is alive. We speak also of those who have a mere "name to live." Yet the Christian who really follows will have his faith proved. He will have more life. Spiritual things will begin to be vivid and real. His communion with the Presence will be vital and real, and his more life will be manifest in greater and greater activity and accomplishment. He will not be a time waster, though he may rest often by the way. Being full of life he will be always ready to put the power of life into operation in his daily task. For up here he has at last come to the actual power of God. The flowing life of God is behind his every doing and his every effort. The great Power House is a life headquarters. It contains the Infinite. It contains the power that made the world and all that therein is. With an open connection or a closed circuit all of the life power that can crowd into us is at our disposal. We may be filled.

But we may more than be filled. An electric wire may form a continuous circuit or one end may be "grounded."

In that case the whole earth comes into the circuit and the whole earth is charged from the great Power House. Life's currents in us may be grounded, and then we shall be the humble conductor of God's life to the whole earth. Every missionary is a conductor. If he keeps moist with the dews of evening sacrifice, and keeps the circuit closed, he carries God's life to all the world. When Jesus had appointed the twelve and had been raised from the dead, to die no more, having in him all the life of the great Power House, he told the twelve to go out and preach the Gospel to every creature. They were the first historic conductors of God's life, and, after them, whoever receives this life can only really have it when he has grounded his circuit that the life may pass, not merely into him, but also through him. It can indeed thrill and grow strong within him only as it also goes through. "Ye are my witnesses." And men believe the witness when, touching us, they feel the thrill of the life. It is the thrill of life that constitutes the jubilance of the song. There is infinite contagion in life. Life is always joyful. It is only death that is sad. We do not weep because we live. We weep that we must die. There comes a time when the life of a soul that is vibrant with the fullness of the life of God needs only to live. Life makes its own laws, and life follows its own courses. A man who is alive does not have to go around telling about it. His glow proclaims it. His whole personality exhibits the life in him according to its own quality and by so much as he has it. There is great value in telling life's

story with the tongue, but we might well believe that life, if we had enough of it, would tell its own story. If we have it, think you any one can mistake it?

Life is natural. Perchance, down in the lower way, we sometimes came to think that death is natural and that life is merely an acquirement. That is because we seem to have to learn to live while we die without having to learn how. And up to a certain point this is, qualifiedly, a fact. But the greater fact is that life, and not death, is the end of creation; and as God is always on the side of life this is the natural fact. He made us for life. And when we have been set on the upper way, where the song is, and the perfume, and the Presence, we have for the first time found our really native breath, our true native land. God does not have to try to live, and a soul once connected with the great Power House of God's life does not have to try, either. He has come to life now that is apparently self-supporting. At all events it is the native air of a child of God.

Thus we come up to a reality that Paul voiced to the Athenians, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Sphered and whelmed in the ocean and air of God's own life we know what he meant when he said, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

# CHAPTER XXII

## COMPANIONSHIP

**In which the Fellowship of the Saints on Earth and in Heaven is Considered as the Next Great Result of Christian Choice of the Upper Way.**

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*"One family we dwell in him,*
*One church above, beneath,*
*Though now divided by the stream,*
*The narrow stream, of death.*
*One army of the living God,*
*To his command we bow;*
*Part of the host have crossed the flood,*
*And part are crossing now."*

—CHARLES WESLEY.

GOD is justified without the result. He has done all he can. And we might almost think that so high and significant an attempt was becoming in the great Infinite, even though it might be that no follower of the Lamb should ever desire to walk the upper way; for it was the attempt to produce the highest in the only way there is: namely, by free choice of the creature to be a friend of God. God did the highest thing, and the best thing, when he made such a being as this, albeit he took the risk. Yet who shall believe that God was merely experimenting? On the contrary, he was building the palace and he knew all the steps he would take. And he knew there will be a palace. The risk was not a risk of absolute loss very long. God knew the strength

of the perfume and the attractiveness of the angel's song. He never has believed that there would be no one to sing it. He had in his mind from the eternities an Innumerable Company. He understood the meaning of the fleece with the blood on it; he knew beforehand the innumerable company who should wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For, though God might be satisfied with himself, without the innumerable company he would not be satisfied with the result. God could not live alone. He could not come down to enjoy the company of the crab and the pine tree. True, he may delight himself in the wonderful creation, seeing that it is staging for the palace, but if the palace never should be built, God would be morally alone. He never said to the angels: Come and sit on my right hand. He never said it to the apes. And without the innumerable company the eternal Atonement and the eternal creation itself would be objectively a failure. But God does not fail. Those fatalists who have thought that God could not be sure of a result unless he fixed the items beforehand, and thus should make freedom impossible and destroy the very plan by which he seeks results, might tell you that God does not fail because he has so much power. And so far as staging is concerned which is all a matter of power, made by power and sustained by power, this would be true. But God is not sure of the result because he has decreed it in the consciousness of his power. The result itself is not primarily due to power. Power accounts for the staging; the spiritual result was

left to be wrought out by the contingent freedom of the creature working together with God.

That is by no means to say that there was ever any danger that it would fail. But it was, and is, sure of success, not because God has all power, but because it is trusted to the influence of the perfume, to the suffering love of the slain Lamb, to the song in the heart, to the irresistible vision of Loveliness in the Being who died. Salvation could never possibly be decreed as some have taught. It is certain in the counsels of God, but it is certain because there is a lifting-up power in him who was lifted up. And for this reason there soon begins to gather into the company of God the friends of God, who walk with him in white. It was never uncertain. From eternity the prophet could have predicted it if only he knew the song and scented the perfume, and saw in the fullness of the time the fleece with the blood upon it. And when the first free soul went up there to the upper way and began walking with God the result had been attained. For God was no longer alone. He had a friend. One art shape, with God's own life in him, has taken his right place. He is no more merely a dust shape. He is a friend of God.

It happens therefore that, as God is not alone, so neither are we. There is an innumerable company. On our way we can enjoy the fellowship of the saints. And for us, this is another result. We have not to live our Christian life by ourselves. The monk is no true Christian. A hermit cannot be a good Christian. Anchorites and eremites are all out of the right method,

and miss one of the most glorious results of their faith. For, though perchance we may be good soloists, the angel's song is, after all, not a solo. It is a tremendous and resounding chorus. Uncounted numbers of men have fallen back from the upper way through this delusion that they could walk alone and merely sing the solo. The great truth that the soul should walk with God they have perverted to mean that the soul should walk with God only. But for the most part the Christian, especially the new and young Christian, has only a little of his communion with God first hand. It would be blessed, perhaps, if we had it all first hand, but when we have closed the circuit so that the life comes in, and keeps coming in, we may not forget that there is an innumerable company all charged on the same circuit with the life of God. Our connection with the great Power House is also a connection, heart beat to heart beat and soul pulse to soul pulse, with the innumerable company. And it is through the electric contact of the innumerable company that God sends much of the abounding life that we feel within us. Cut a man off from the innumerable company and the chances are he would mostly be cut off from the spiritual God. One of the great results of the choice that sets our feet in the upper way is just this help of the innumerable company. We learn soon the angel's song when we hear it chorused by the singers who learned it before us. Keep in contact with the others, my friend. Else you will soon have no life left with God.

This innumerable company, so far as this mortal life is concerned, we call the Church. It is not an indifferent accident of human workmanship. It is the organic form on earth of the society of the innumerable company. There is some Christianity outside the organism, because the organism itself is all the time begetting generations of believers. But only in the first generation is there any vitality in the extra Christianity. At best the disadvantages of attempting to walk alone are so great that very little is accomplished, and still less enjoyed, by the solitary pilgrim trying to sing his solo.

The fellowship of worship has come to be underestimated. The most definite and real Christian education is still in the sanctuary. It is only here that thou canst hear about Thyself, considered as a pilgrim trying to walk the upper way. The heaven songs and the life songs and the work songs and the worship songs are sung in the sanctuary. How little of the music of the upper way there is anywhere else! Cut off from the great congregation a disciple would scarcely learn the tone of the highest in all his earthly pilgrimage; and that would be an almost irreparable loss. Perhaps there is no aid to the life of the highest comparable to the influence of the songs of the sanctuary. The whole Bible has been put into song. The experience of long centuries, of those who walked the upper way with God, until they "were not, for God took" them, has been hymned for the pilgrim's devotions. What an incalculable heritage! And what a

folly when a misguided pilgrim separates himself, and takes to an obscure side of the way, and sets up a solo of his own! Blessed is the fellowship of the saints.

But the saints of the upper way do not sit down to sing. They sing as they walk. They sing between the shafts. They sing climbing the hills of the mortal pilgrimage. And joining the fellowship of song they feel also the thrill of the fellowship of service and of labor. True, the main thing with us is to be "laborers together with God," but God made us gregarious, and then social. So little power did he add to our freedom that no one of us can do much when standing alone. The fellowship of the saints is necessary; for our labor with God is labor to build a kingdom, and though first "the kingdom of heaven is within you" it is not built even there by solitary labor of an isolated soul. No busy colony of ants, working to erect their mound and excavate their cell, should be more cooperative than the fellowship of the saints. Here for the first time is labor harmonious. The eye says not to the hand, "I have no need of thee." Infinite variety of talent contributes to the common end.

How light and pleasant is service when it is shared! The New England farmer sometimes sits for days in his cheerless barn husking the autumn corn, his hard-worked wife is in the house paring the red apples to be strung on the twine for drying, and the tasks are lonely and uninteresting. But did you ever go to a New England husking party, or to an apple bee? Then the old barn is lighted with lanterns hung from every

hook and beam. Lads and lasses search for the red ear. There is laughter and shouting and snatches of song. The fiddlers are in the hay mow and make merry with their gay music. The great corn heap dwindles like snow drifts in springtime—and nobody thinks it is toil. Such is the difference between the solitary worker in God's vineyard and the member of the laughing and singing company who perform hard service together. Love and helpfulness and human sympathy develop, and friendships grow strong, and companion thoughts flow free. And the hard task, that was cheerless and lonely before, in the fellowship of the innumerable company becomes joyful and we count it no longer to be toil.

But though we seek this fellowship, and form these companies, we need not be troubled about their outward aspects. The fellowship of the saints is blessed unity, but it may not be uniformity at all. Upon the free saint, walking with God, can no exactitudes be imposed that do not fit him. Doubtless mistakes are made at this point, but fellowship would soon cease if it depended upon our all wearing the same kind of clothes. Fellowship arises not because we have to agree, but purely because we do agree. Let us free this delightful aspect of the Christian life from all constraint. Those who love the Lord will walk together, never fear! And if companionships are not divine, and holy, and desirable, then would they better not be. If anywhere in the fellowship of saints as represented in the earth there is still the spirit of caste, and exclusive-

ness, and the clique, that must be because the pilgrims have brought up with them on their garments some of the old slime of the quagmire. It is a slow process to purify a fellowship of saints. Only in the better life will it be without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Prophetically and ideally, however, in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek, male nor female. And there is always enough good company on the upper way. And we gradually find that the differences in the groups are far less than the agreements, and at last that they all have a common hope and a common Leader, and sing also a common song.

We do not walk alone. On that upper way, some on this side and some just beyond the thin veil of mist that shrouds the sunset, are the great and good of the ages. Patriarch, prophet, psalmist, king, priest, and martyr walk there with us. It is a glorious company. The wisdom of man is there, and the holiness of those who have been made perfect through suffering. Moses is there, and Isaiah, and David, perchance also even worldly Solomon, the apostles and the fathers all, white souls who have endured as seeing him who is invisible, sainted mothers singing with saved sons, and evangelists rejoicing with the converts to whom they pointed out the way. We clasp hands with kings, up here, and company with the royal and noble of the centuries. And when the chorus rings out, and we hear them sing, we join the song also. It is the song of the jubilant journey, the marching song of the fellowship of saints.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## We'll Meet Again Over There. Good Night

In which the Discourse Draws to a Close, with a View of the Immortal Life and the Reunion with Loved Ones as a Final Result of the Choice of the Upper Way.

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*"Eternity makes heaven to be heaven; 'tis the diamond in the ring. O blessed day that shall have no night, the sunlight of thy glory shall rise upon the soul and never set! O blessed spring that shall have no autumn or fall of the leaf."*—Watson.

*"Jesus my Lord to glory's gone,*
*Him will I go and see;*
*And all my brethren here below,*
*Will soon come after me.*

*"When we've been there ten thousand years,*
*Bright shining as the sun,*
*We've no less days to sing God's praise*
*Than when we first begun."*

Hither have we come on our open journey. Soon must we part. Soon it is to say but "Farewell," and "Good Night," for I perceive that already the haze of coming sunset is gathering on the western hills. If the journey has been pleasant, and the talk interesting, that perhaps was because the theme was so important and so high. The canopy was wide, the breeze was free, and we have had room. Let us speak our closing word ere we part company and say "Good Night."

When it has been spoken we shall but know that all

that has been said is but a fragment of all that might be said. Such a communion as this has been, under the canopy, in the wide open of life, at best can only be suggestive. After we have gone home, and the darkness has fallen and the lights have been lighted in the hearth, we shall think of much that we could not speak about to-day. And in the chamber of the mind, where the flow of thought is ever moving, we shall fill in the missing chapters and the parts that are lacking to complete this theme that is never really completed, and finish this discussion that never can really be finished. But let us have our closing word while the slow twilight gathers.

Much have we talked about life. For this way where the pilgrim has come to walk is a life way. Over against it the lower way was ever a death way. But the Being who died was slain, not for the death that he died, but for the life that he lived. And we have said, and we believe, that this life is the highest. It was for this all the lower life, that we have called the staging, has ever existed. The end in view was the highest life. But there must come a time in any process when the process culminates and can get no farther. The process of life culminates, and can go no farther, when it has come up to the highest. What, then; shall it now begin to fall and be lost? Having built the palace, shall the builder now suffer his final work to decay?

That, as we have agreed, is absurd. Mortality may be predicated of the staging, but the palace—that must endure. It must unless God, the builder, were insane,

or a mere governing caprice. For the builder never turns upon the palace, when it is done, and destroys that too. That was built to stand. And the irresistible force of reason is behind us when we conclude that if life has reached the level of the highest it is built to stand. This city has foundations. Its maker and builder is God. The soul that has come to breathe the perfume as his native breath has found at last the great elixir. His lower life could not stand. It was not fit. No life of beast could be immortal. It never was fit. Only that which is worthy to live at last can live forever. And God has never promised a forever life to anything lower than the highest. Even should it be that some lower existence were indefinitely prolonged there must be an end. Even death and hell go into the lake of fire.

Our chance therefore to taste immortality lies, and lies alone, in the choice that sets our feet in the upper way. "He that hath the Son hath life." "Because I live ye shall live also." The electric current connected with the power house is charged as long as the connection remains. The soul of the disciple, connected with the great Power House of God's life, must live as long as God lives. Immortality is by reason of the connection. We shall live hereafter for the same reason that we live at all; namely, because we are connected with the Power House and have life from the great Source of life.

That which reason and faith compel us to believe in, moreover, we may realize long before we know by

experience what it means to live again. A man standing on the surface of the earth, especially walking through a wide valley, or on a level plain, looks up and only sees that the sun and stars move along over his head. He cannot feel the motion of the earth. He does not realize his flight through the solar year of more than half a billion of miles through space, and his journey of twenty-five thousand miles a day on this spinning ball of an earth that God has flung out into the air alone. He thinks this is really his home, and abides here as on a fixed, flat, solid surface of rock and sand. But when reason has grown a little, aided by hypothesis, which is only a longer name for faith, he comes to know in his reason that it is not so. He is not fixed on a flat plain, with all the stars swinging around him. At least his reason assents when he is told what actually is the truth. And so the reason and the faith of a man assents when he is told that this world is not his permanent abiding place, and when he hears that there is a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Pity it is, moreover, that the greater number of earthly pilgrims get no farther than that.

But the man who stands in the valley or walks over the plain and has seen the stars move, and has never felt the earth move, may become an astronomer. Now every imaginative astronomer will tell you that he can feel the earth move and realize its sphericity. After long watching of the stars, and the moon, and the planets, and noting how the motion of the earth soon carries his instrument out of his line of sight, so that

he has to adjust it again and again, he gets a new consciousness about these facts. In his tower, living high above the valley and the plain, he feels the earth move and almost sees it move. And such may and ought to be the case with the heaven native caged for a little space in this flesh box and caught for a passing day in this dust snare of the earth. He reasons that he is a heaven native, and he believes that there will some day be a house not made with hands, but why is he not actually living in it? And he may be if he will stay in the tower. Living high, with the telescope of the faith fixed on heavenly things, we shall soon cease our geocentric grubbing and know that "our heaven is everywhere, if we but love the Lord." The true attraction of a saved soul is heliocentric and cœlocentric—that is, fixed on "the things that are above;" and because we are now immortal, and belong no longer with the things that perish, we shall not be looking on to a graveyard and a home in the dust. We shall feel the unstable motion of the perishing earth and we shall say,

> I'm but a pilgrim here; heaven is my home;
> Earth is a desert drear; heaven is my home."

That will not remove us from our holy duty to the Here and Now. But it will make the Here and Now a fragment of the Immortal Years.

There has been quite enough in our day of the "One-world-at-a-time" sentiment. No man can have "one world at a time." He cannot have this world, for anything that is actually valuable in it, until the other is in his heart. And if the other is in his heart it will bring

him nearer to this in sympathy with all its struggle, and sorrow, and effort, and in the desire to tell out the secret of that other world that is in his heart.

For it is the other world, brought down here, that lifts up this one. The ancient ages of the cross, in which the early apostles spoke their message in the darkness of Roman superstition and in the midnight of pagan unbelief, were regenerated by the other world brought down in the unworldly and unselfish lives of the saints and martyrs of that day who carried it in their hearts. And if our own pagan areas and realms of this modern day are to be regenerated as those were it will be by some tremendous quickening of the sense of the other world. But Thyself—pondering this thought meanwhile—thou hast this other world in thy heart. This is the end of sorrow and trial. No matter what comes now. With the other world singing in thy heart thou hast come to the transcendent place of victory on the upper way. All is well. This is the last beautiful result: the other world felt in thy heart. Thou hast friends over there, doubtless. One by one they have gone over, and if age is coming on thee soon thou hast the hope of seeing the loved ones. What a gathering there will be when we sing the full song in the great beyond! For though thou art not looking at the graveyard thou hast a sob in thy throat to remember the little mound where they laid the baby that crowed, and reminded thee of heaven. And mother—gray haired, wrinkled, saintly—they made another mound for her where the grass has overgrown it these many years.

What friends of thy youth are passed to the great majority! Vacant chairs sit by the hearth where at dim twilight thou canst still almost see them sitting as of yore, these dear ones long gone from the scenes of earth. What a gathering it will be!

For thou hast not really known the fullness of joy that awaits thee yonder. At the best of it, the upper way for the mortal pilgrim is clouded with many shadows. The song was in thy heart, but O! in how many calm silences of the evening, looking upon the flush of dying sunsets, thou hast longed to let loose the song of the everlasting where the throne should shine and the unspeakable glory dawn. And though thou art free in Christ there is a freedom thou hast not tasted here, in this mortal tabernacle of flesh that ties thee to the earth. But there shall come a day, when the song shall rise and the soul shall soar, and out of the haze that hangs over the far river shall emerge on thy sight all the faces that vanished and the forms that floated away with the death angel when he came, and thou shalt know them again. And on that shining shore shall they walk with thee forever. And there in the midst of the throne, where is the fountain of living waters, he stands, this Being who died and lives again, and there the sun shall never set for "the Lamb is the light thereof." "Roll swiftly round, ye wheels of time, and bring that welcome day!" In the hallelujahs that roll up from all the ransomed of the Lord shall we know in that great day what is the happy end of the Way of Salvation.

So softly falls the light of the sunset around us. In the fragrant oleander tree the soft-voiced thrush is bidding his mate good night. Sweet fragrance floats from the hilltops, and by the wayside sings the splashing brook laving the grasses all the summer day. And we relapse into silence, thinking how beautiful to the children of God is the world that he has made. So reach we the end of the open journey where we have taken sweet counsel together. We turn home, in our ears and hearts the tender note of the dove flying to his cote, and the sigh of the evening breeze dying with the light that fades. Good night. God be with thee.